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AOHP Releases Updated Resource Guide For Mass Immunization of Healthcare Workers

PITTSBURGH – The Association of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare (AOHP) recently published the third edition of *Beyond Getting Started: A Resource Guide for Preparing for Mass Immunization/Prophylaxis of Healthcare Workers* to promote mass immunization/prophylaxis capability - a critical function in emergency preparedness involving an infectious agent.

Emergency preparedness is an essential responsibility within healthcare facilities. With the reality of Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), bioterrorism, the recent Ebola outbreak, the resurgence of vaccine preventable childhood diseases, Enterovirus D-68, and the potential for pandemic novel influenza viruses, as well as other emerging pathogens in North America, the involvement of the occupational health professional (OHP) is vital to the successful creation and implementation of a facility's emergency preparedness plan.

Healthcare workers (HCWs) are among the most important individuals to protect in the event of an infectious disease outbreak, as they care for victims exposed to the infectious agent/s. If HCWs are not protected, they may become contagious before their symptoms appear, risking transmission to patients, coworkers, community members and their own families. However, HCWs have not always been eager to receive recommended vaccines. (In a September 2014 report, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 72.5% of HCWs in the United States were vaccinated against influenza.) Therefore, it is not only important to develop a plan to protect large numbers of frontline HCWs, it is also important to include a comprehensive educational component in the program to dramatically increase vaccination/prophylaxis compliance rates in the event of an infectious disease outbreak or bioterrorism attack

This resource guide includes:

- Information to develop a comprehensive mass immunization/prophylaxis plan.
- Samples of a successful facility-wide mass immunization/prophylaxis plan and pharmacy disaster plan.
- Sample drug fact sheets.
- General resources, including Web links, for use in developing a customized plan.

AOHP is recognized as the definitive resource for issues related to staff in the healthcare setting and is committed to providing comprehensive resources that offer updated knowledge about occupational health and safety in healthcare. Its renowned *Getting Started Manual* and *Beyond Getting Started Resource Guides* offer valuable practice information on cutting edge issues for occupational health professionals across the nation.

AOHP is a national association representing tens of thousands of healthcare personnel whose vision is to be the defining resource and leading advocate for occupational health, safety and well-being in healthcare. AOHP promotes health and safety for healthcare personnel through: advocacy; education and networking; health and safety advancement through best practice and research; and partnering with employers, regulatory agencies and related associations.

For more information, call AOHP Headquarters at 800-362-4347, or e-mail info@aohp.org. *Beyond Getting Started: A Resource Guide for Preparing for Mass Immunization/Prophylaxis of Healthcare Workers* is a free resource for members and can be purchased by non-members for a nominal fee. It can be accessed online at <http://www.aohp.org/aohp/TOOLSFORYOURWORK/PublicationsforYourPractice/BeyondGettingStarted.aspx>

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