

Quick-Hitting Survey Measles Vaccination Requirements

James Cheung, Associate, Research & Advisory
Melissa Stahl, Senior Manager, Research & Advisory

Executive Summary

Methodology

In May 2019, The Health Management Academy conducted a quick-hitting survey of Leading Health Systems regarding measles vaccination requirements for patient-facing personnel. The 6 responding Chief Operating Officers (COO) and Chief Human Resources Officers (CHRO) represent health systems with an average Total Revenue of \$4.0 billion that own or operate 45 hospitals and have approximately 630 thousand admissions per annum.

Key Findings

- The majority of health systems (83%) require proof of measles vaccination or immunity for all individuals with patient contact.
- Most health systems (83%) restrict patient contact for individuals who cannot – or refuse – to receive the measles vaccination or prove immunity.
- One-third (33%) of health systems will make accommodations for individuals who are unable or unwilling to become vaccinated, commonly relocating the individual to a non-clinical area.

Results

Thus far in 2019, over 1,000 individual cases of measles have been reported across 28 states – the largest number of cases in the United States since the disease was declared eliminated in 2000.¹ Due to this resurgence of measles across the country, health system executives are evaluating their policies regarding employee vaccination requirements.

Currently, the majority (83%) of health systems require any individual with patient contact to receive the measles vaccination or provide proof of immunity. Of the health systems that do not currently require vaccination (17%), all are considering implementing this requirement (Figure 1).

To meet this requirement, health systems will commonly provide vaccinations and immunity tests to their employees. For individuals who cannot provide proof of measles vaccination or immunity, most health systems (83%) will provide vaccination or immunity testing at the health system's expense. The health system that does not require vaccinations will provide screening services for employees, however will not provide vaccinations at the expense of the health system.

For those individuals who are unable or refuse to be vaccinated or prove immunity, 83% of executives responded that their health system does not permit patient contact (Figure 2). Only the health system that does require the measles vaccination does not restrict patient contact for those who are not vaccinated.

Figure 1. Does your organization require measles vaccination or proof of immunity for physicians and other individuals who have patient contact?

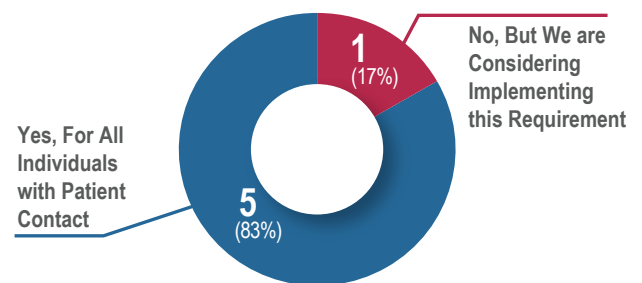
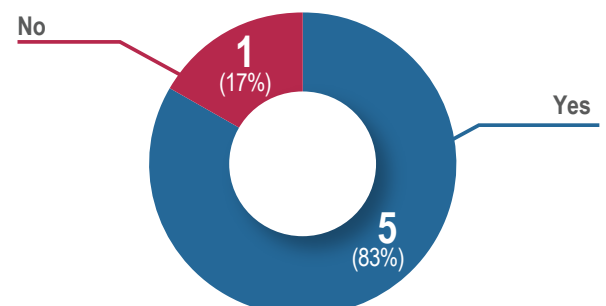


Figure 2. Does your health system restrict patient contact for individuals who cannot/refuse to receive measles vaccination or prove immunity?



¹ Measles Cases and Outbreaks. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>.

One-third of health systems (33%) will make accommodations for those who refuse vaccination, typically providing masks or relocating the employee to a non-clinical position (Figure 3). Additionally, the same 33% of health systems allow measles vaccination exemptions for staff on the basis of religion or medical conditions. However, these exceptions are uncommon and only extended to individuals in non-clinical areas. One CHRO commented that ***“these exemptions are extremely rare, and are subject to review by a group of experts, and are only considered in non-patient care areas.”***

Figure 3. Do your health systems allow exemptions and/or accommodations for those who refuse vaccination?

