MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 27, 2020

TO: Contra Costa Emergency Medical Services

FROM: Chris Farnitano, M.D., Health Officer

SUBJECT: End of Influenza Season for Influenza Vaccination/Masking Order April 1, 2020

I appreciate your help and support in protecting the residents of Contra Costa County. As defined by the influenza vaccination/masking order (https://cchealth.org/flu/pdf/Memo-Flu-Vaccination-or-Masking-order-for-Licensed-Health-Care-Facilities.pdf), the influenza season was scheduled to end on April 30th but will now officially end at 12:01am on April 1, 2020 and will resume at 12:01am on November 1, 2020.

CDC, California and local surveillance data indicate that there has been a rapid decline in the number of positive influenza tests and the percent positive influenza tests as surveillance laboratories, and there also has been a sharp decline in local influenza outbreaks in congregate living facilities, consistent with a resolving influenza season. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the widespread shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), and the desire to prioritize PPE for the protection of staff and patients from COVID-19, I am declaring the end of the influenza season at 12:01am April 1, 2020 and lifting the requirement for masking of unvaccinated EMS workers for routine care. Influenza vaccination is still strongly recommended for any remaining health care workers who have not yet been vaccinated during the 2019-2020 season, if supplies are available.

California surveillance data indicate that the predominant strains during the 2019-2020 influenza season were ones matched by the seasonal vaccine. Regional influenza disease data show a sharp rise in influenza disease activity earlier than in past influenza seasons. Influenza seasons can vary in arrival, duration, and severity. Routinely vaccinating your patients and staff as soon as influenza vaccine is available can help protect them when disease activity peaks early in the season.

For questions about vaccine preventable diseases such as influenza or to report a possible disease outbreak, please contact our Communicable Disease Programs, Public Health Division, Contra Costa Health Services at (925) 313-6740.

Cc: Board of Supervisors
    David Twa