

Protection, Professionalism, & Power:
Examining the Pros & Cons of
Healthcare Worker
Immunization Programs

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I am fan of vaccines



- Most effective & cost-effective medical care
- Huge public health benefit
- Everyone sans medical contraindication should get fully immunized on schedule ...
– & HCW have a special duty to do so!

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The Children's
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- HCW mandate policy since 2009
- I am expressing my own thoughts
- Importance of dialogue across dissent

I nonetheless have reservations

1. Data supporting claim that HCW flu vaccination will reduce hospital-based nosocomial flu is tenuous (nursing homes are not hospitals)
2. Effectiveness of flu vaccine varies annually, ranging from 70 to 90% protection when the vaccine strains and circulating strains are well matched ... and when they are not, 50% to nil.
3. Cost-effectiveness of mandated programs has not been estimated, let alone established
 - Opportunity costs of mandated programs have not been considered

I nonetheless have reservations

4. Mandates dodge the issue of why rates are so low (intellectually lazy)
5. Mandates shift professional ethics from personal to organizational
6. Mandates fuel anti-vaccine blow back
7. Mandates raise important issues about power, equity, labor relations, and civil liberties

Alternative Strategies

- Pre-condition of employment
- Mount effective immunization campaigns
 - And be willing to pay for them
- Evaluate the importance of flu immunization in the overall portfolio of patient safety work

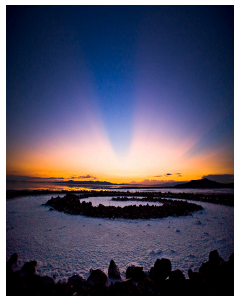
Frame vs. Framework

- Viewed through the limited frame of “Should HCW roll up their sleeves?” the position of mandating annual flu shot has some merits (& above mentioned limits)

- Viewed through the framework of “How can we optimize patient outcomes?” the arguments for mandates are far weaker

Thank you

- Questions?
- Comments?
- Complaints?



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