Flu Vaccine Required For Massachusetts Students

On Wednesday Massachusetts state public health officials announced students will be required to get the influenza vaccine. The mandate includes anyone six months of age or older who attend child care, pre-school, kindergarten, K-12, as well as colleges and universities.

The flu shot requirement is intended to reduce flu-related illness in order to reduce respiratory illnesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a press release from the Department of Public Health.

This requirement is in addition to existing vaccine requirements for students in school in Massachusetts.

Students will be expected to have received a flu vaccine by December 31. Exceptions include those with medical or religious exemptions and those who homeschool or participate only with distance learning.

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Many parents are against the new mandate, others are in favor of it, but regardless your child must get the flu vaccine by December 31 of this year in order to return to school January 1. This mandate includes elementary and secondary students who are using a remote education model, they will not be exempt.

> *"Every year, thousands of people of all ages are affected by influenza, leading to many hospitalizations and deaths," said Dr. Larry Madoff, Medical Director, DPH's Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences. "It is more important now than ever to get a flu vaccine because flu symptoms are very similar to those of COVID-19 and preventing the flu will save lives and preserve healthcare resources."*

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