

# *Business Matters Fight the Flu!*



**Cumberland District  
Public Health Council**



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## **Cumberland District Public Health Council Flu & Pneumococcal Workgroup Members:**

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention/DHHS  
HomeHealth Visiting Nurses/MaineHealth  
VNA Home Health Hospice/Mercy Health System  
CHANS Home Health Care/MidCoast  
Patient Centered Medical Home Patient Advisory Council  
Maine Primary Care Association  
Southern Maine Agency on Aging

MaineHealth  
MMC Family Medicine  
Pfizer, Inc.  
Merck Vaccines

Portland Public Schools  
Gorham School Department  
Westbrook School Department

Portland Public Health  
Bridgton Hospital  
MedImmune  
MEA Benefits Trust  
University of New England  
University of Southern Maine  
Yarmouth School Department

# *Dear Employer:*

With influenza, or “flu” season fast approaching, the Cumberland District Public Health Council would like to share some important information with you regarding the importance of influenza vaccination for your employees.

Partners from throughout Cumberland County have collaborated on this project with the mutual goal of increasing the number of adults who are vaccinated against the flu. This toolkit was adapted from one created by the York District Public Health Council. The toolkit includes: recommended strategies, local provider information and “How to Host an On-site Flu Clinic”.

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness. Each year, the flu impacts 5-20% of the U.S. adult population. Complications from the flu are responsible for more than 200,000 hospitalizations and an average of 36,000 deaths. From an employer’s perspective, the flu causes diminished productivity and increased work absence.

**The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each year.**

By offering the flu vaccine to employees, studies have shown that corporate America has reduced the number of sick days taken by workers.

Hosting a flu vaccine clinic for your employees helps you:

- ◆ Reduce employee absenteeism.
- ◆ Reduce time away from the job to go get a flu vaccine.
- ◆ Enhance employee moral.

Every year influenza, or “flu,” affects employers and businesses. Flu costs businesses approximately **\$10.4 billion\*** in direct costs for hospitalizations and outpatient visits for adults.

- ◆ While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the three viruses that research suggests will be most common each year.
- ◆ Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu as soon as seasonal vaccine is available. **CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.**

\*Molinari NA, Ortega-Sanchez IR, Messonnier ML, et al. The annual impact of seasonal influenza in the US: measuring disease burden and costs. *Vaccine*. 2007; 25(27):5086-96.

# Recommended Strategies

The purpose of this Toolkit is to help businesses and employers fight the flu and to offer tips and suggestions to consider when planning and responding to the seasonal flu. Additional information can be found at the CDC website, <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/business>. **CDC recommends three strategies this season for businesses and employers to help fight the flu.**

**Strategy 1: Host a flu vaccination clinic in the workplace.** To minimize absenteeism, employers frequently offer onsite seasonal flu vaccination to employees at no or low cost to their employees. This option can work well if the employer has an on-site occupational health clinic. If you don't have an occupational health program, community vaccinators can be contracted to provide seasonal flu vaccination services on-site. (see box below)

**Strategy 2: Promote flu vaccination in the community.** Make sure your employees know where they and their family can get seasonal flu vaccination in the community. If your worksite is not appropriate for an onsite vaccination clinic, you can also partner with a community flu clinic to serve your employees.

Find out about flu clinics in your community by calling 211 (or on the web at [www.211maine.org](http://www.211maine.org)), or one of the providers listed below. The Cumberland District Public Health Council can provide posters and other education materials (contact [becca.matusovich@maine.gov](mailto:becca.matusovich@maine.gov)) to help you promote flu clinics to your employees and their families.

## Contact one of the following local providers:

Agency	Phone Contact	Email Contact	Able to bill insurance	Vaccinate children
HomeHealth Visiting Nurses	1-800-660-4867	<a href="mailto:fluclinic@homehealth.org">fluclinic@homehealth.org</a>	Yes	Yes
VNA Home Health Hospice	1-207-400-8799	<a href="mailto:vnafluclinic@vnahomehealth.org">vnafluclinic@vnahomehealth.org</a>	Yes	Yes
CHANS/MidCoast Health	1-207-721-6982		Yes	Yes

# How to Host an On-site Flu Clinic?

- ◆ Space to vaccinate staff
  - ◇ Small room or cubicle with table, chairs, a trashcan.
- ◆ Participants:
  - ◇ Employees: At your discretion you may also choose to include spouses and children.
- ◆ Provider will supply:
  - ◇ All supplies and staffing
  - ◇ Promotional materials
  - ◇ Billing

## Decisions to make prior to the clinic

### 1. Type(s) of vaccine to offer:

There are two types of flu vaccine that you can offer to staff

- ◇ The “flu shot” – an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle. The seasonal flu shot is approved for use in people 6 months of age and older, including healthy people, people with chronic medical conditions and pregnant women.
- ◇ The nasal-spray flu vaccine – a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu. This vaccine is approved for use in healthy people 2-49 years of age who are not pregnant.

### 2. Should you open the clinic up to the public?

- ◇ Some businesses have natural foot traffic. Offering flu shots to the public is a gesture of goodwill towards the community.

### 3. Methods of payment:

- ◇ Cost of the vaccine will be determined prior to the start of the vaccine season.
- ◇ Some providers are able to bill your insurance company directly. Please speak to individual providers regarding this. Co-pays may apply.
- ◇ Employee pays the cost of vaccination.
  - ◇ This method usually results in lower numbers of employees vaccinated.
- ◇ Employer covers all or a portion of the cost.

### 4. Promote clinic and have staff sign up.

- ◇ Promote via posters, email, newsletters, websites and pay stub notices, etc...

<http://www.maine-flu.gov> - **for general flu information**

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print.htm> - **for print resources**

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/> - **for general flu information**

**For more information about the Cumberland District Public Health Council:**

[www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/olph/lphd/district2/index.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/olph/lphd/district2/index.shtml)