

# Businesses: Plan for the 2009-2010 Flu Season

Know  
What to Do  
About the Flu

## **Flu season is unpredictable.**

No one knows the severity of illness the 2009 H1N1 flu will cause or the amount of illness that may occur as a result of seasonal flu. It is important to make plans for different situations.

## **Encourage Healthy Habits.**

- Keep supplies for handwashing stocked at all times – specifically, soap, running water and paper towels. Consider the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers where handwashing is not possible.
- Keep tissues and “no touch” wastebaskets convenient for use.
- Keep cleaning supplies handy – for example, disinfecting wipes to wipe off frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, desks, keyboards and phones.

## **Encourage vaccination.**

Vaccination is the first step in protecting against seasonal viruses.

- Work with your insurance carrier or a local health agency. It may be possible to offer vaccinations on-site.
- Consider allowing employees time off to get their flu shot(s).

## **Prepare for increased absenteeism.**

- Monitor your absenteeism and prepare to respond.
- Identify your essential services and be sure you can continue to provide these services.
- Cross train personnel to perform essential functions so that your essential functions can continue even if key staff are absent.

## **Advise employees to stay home if they are sick.**

Flu can be spread easily from person to person. Take steps to prevent the spread of flu.

- Encourage sick employees to stay home. Review your policies and practices to consider ways to allow flexibility for employees to stay home when they are sick.
- Allow people to stay home to care for children and other family members.
- Share info with employees so they understand sick leave policies.
- Don't require doctor's slips for sick leave. Doctor's offices and hospitals may be overwhelmed and it might not be practical for employees to see their healthcare provider.

## **Plan for a variety of situations.**

- If the severity of illness increases, you may be asked to do more to increase the physical distance between people – called social distancing. For example, spacing desks/people farther apart, working from home, or cancelling large community gatherings.