September 21, 2018

Dear Poultry Operation Owner/Manager:

Influenza vaccination can protect your workers from missing work and from inadvertently spreading influenza viruses. **Please consider offering on-site flu vaccine clinics for all of your employees and contractors, especially those who handle poultry.**

**Seasonal influenza vaccination benefits your workers:** Each year, on average, 5 to 20 percent of the U.S. population gets the flu, resulting in tens of thousands of hospitalizations, thousands of deaths, annual medical costs of $10.4 billion, and additional annual lost earnings and costs of $16.3 billion.\(^1\) Vaccination can result in 18%–45% fewer lost workdays and 18%–28% fewer days working with reduced effectiveness.\(^2\) **By preventing flu, employers can help protect employees’ health and reduce losses in productivity and revenue.**

Reduce the risk of dual infection with seasonal influenza and avian influenza: **Avian influenza** (AI) H5 and AI H7 subtypes have been found in birds across the United States. AI has now been detected during four consecutive influenza seasons in the US; in California, highly pathogenic AI H5 has been found in two commercial poultry flocks in 2015 and low pathogenic AI H7 in two commercial poultry flocks in 2018. No human illness caused by these viruses has been detected yet. However, poultry workers are highly encouraged to receive the influenza vaccine each fall to reduce the possibility of dual infection with avian and human influenza A viruses, which could result in the formation and spread of new influenza viruses.\(^3,4\) **Seasonal influenza vaccine is not expected to protect against single infection with an avian influenza virus, but could prevent dual infection with a seasonal virus and an avian virus.**

**Consider offering worksite influenza clinics:** Hosting a flu shot clinic can help your company to:

- Reduce employee absenteeism
- Reduce time away from the job to go to another location for the shot
- Enhance your relationship with your employees
- Be better prepared in the event of an outbreak situation requiring vaccination of employees

Other options to prevent influenza include:

- Partnering with your local health department, occupational health provider, or pharmacy to host community flu clinics
- Providing vouchers for staff to get vaccinated at a retail pharmacy or local clinic for free
- Supporting paid time off work for employees to receive flu vaccine
- Reminding workers of everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs:
  - Wash hands often with soap and water
  - Avoid contact with sick people
  - Stay home and away from others when they’re sick
For more information about worksite influenza clinics or how to prevent influenza, please contact your local health department. Thank you for protecting your business and staff from influenza this season.

Sincerely,

Barbara Materna, Ph.D., CIH, Chief
Occupational Health Branch
California Department of Public Health

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Resources for planning a worksite flu clinic:

- CDC “Make it your business to fight the flu” Toolkit
- CDC Foundation “Business Pulse” flu prevention website

Information on protecting poultry workers during an outbreak of avian influenza:

- CDC, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Alert: Protecting Poultry Workers from Avian Influenza (Bird Flu), May 2008
- Cal/OSHA Regulation, “Aerosol Transmissible Diseases – Zoonotic” 8CCR §5199.1
  [www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/5199-1.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/5199-1.html)

References:
   [https://www.businessgrouphealth.org/pub/f314b0a7-2354-d714-511f-57f12807ba2c](https://www.businessgrouphealth.org/pub/f314b0a7-2354-d714-511f-57f12807ba2c)