

## **Preventing the Flu in Your Workplace**

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At the start of 2006, the high probability of an active flu season and fears surrounding the global spread of the avian flu are just a few of the issues that concern Northeast Ohio employers, especially as they relate to workplace productivity. The follow survey was conducted by ERC in January of 2006 to see what organizations are doing to prevent the spread of the flu in their workplaces. **154** organizations responded to the survey.

**Organizations that offer free (company paid) flu shots to employees:** 55%

**Organizations that offer paid sick leave to ALL employees:** 56%

### **Other proactive steps organizations are taking to help prevent the spread of the flu in their workplace:**

- Education at safety meetings.
- We actually need to do a better job encouraging people not to come in sick. We are so thin that people feel they have to come in no matter what.
- Nothing at this time
- Posting the information sent to us from the ERC Quick hits. Thank you for the good information and the web sites to get more information.
- We post information on the HR Bulletin Board and around the office about preventing the flu, hand washing, etc.
- We offered the flu shots but employees had to pay for them. Also, I'm going to put Purell next to the copiers in each department.
- 1) Signs are posted reminding everyone to wash their hands, cover their mouth when coughing. 2) We place hand-sanitizer bottles throughout the company to 'remind' people to wash their hands. 3) We have our maintenance crew sanitize all door knobs with anti-bacterial sprays every night during the winter months.
- We held an on-site clinic for the flu vaccine. Employees were responsible for the \$20 cost, but it was a competitive rate for the vaccine, and had the



convenience of being on-site during working hours, so no loss of time for the employee to have to seek the service with another medical provider.

- Nothing
- Currently we have nothing in place.
- We do offer flu shots to the employees on-site but they have to pay \$8.00.
- Our employees can receive flu shots from the city health department at the same cost as city residents.
- The HR department sends out daily wellness tips to all associates on our email system. In addition, we sponsor wellness fairs twice per year.
- This issue has not been discussed.
- In addition to offering free flu shots for our employees, we provided free flu shots to our employees spouse or significant other.
- Antibacterial dispensers by time clocks (we use biometric hand readers) and in all restrooms. Wellness newsletters that include preventive measures for avoiding the flu.
- We post reminders in the lunchroom to 'Wash your Hands' and 'Cover your Cough'.
- We offer flu shots to our associates, however these are at the associate's expense. We have negotiated a favorable cost, compared to other flu clinics. We also offer flu shots to immediate family members of our associates. Regarding paid sick leave, our exempt associates are paid for sick time off and our non-exempt associates have the capability of earning paid personal time.
- We offer on-site flu shots, but they are employee-paid. We are also looking into providing hand sanitizer stations around the building to help prevent the spread of germs.
- Educating the workforce regarding the flu and the ways it can be spread. Encouraging employees to take steps to avoid the spread of the flu.
- We have placed hand sanitizer at copy machines, time clocks and throughout the office/warehouse areas.
- Nothing



- Most of our locations offer flu shots to the workforce at no cost or minimal cost.
- We encourage people to stay home when they are sick. The main challenge with flu shots is that it is hard to find a company that will do flu shots for a company with only 15 employees.
- Offer flu shots by payroll deduct in our offices
- Nothing at this time.
- Encouraging employees if they are sick to stay away from the workplace to prevent spread of disease.
- Employees must wash hands before returning to work station after visiting restroom. Purell dispensers in restrooms & lunchrooms.
- We send out educational emails, brochures, web pages and postings.
- None at this time.
- Provide Heart Health Newsletter to all employees. Include EAP information items in the employee newsletter
- Posted information on ways to combat flu in all restrooms. Provide anti-bacterial hand lotion. Have our cleaning staff use clorox wipes on door knobs and in the kitchen area.
- We subsidize the cost, and the employee pays a portion of the cost for flu shots on site. We do this annually every fall.
- We offer partially company paid flu shots on site each year.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers are available in selected locations.
- Our insurance carrier is Kaiser and we have promoted to employees that they visit the location nearest them to obtain a flu shot.
- No other steps to prevent the flu are being taken.
- We provide flu shots for employees at the facility for a cost of \$20. We do allow for unpaid sick leave, short-term disability and leave under FMLA.
- We actually require employees to get a flu shot, as part of their annual physical, unless there is some medical reason that they shouldn't. If they refuse to get one, and they subsequently are absent due to flu or flu-like symptoms, they will not be paid sick leave for that absence.
- None other than the above.



- Regarding responses above, we do offer flu shots on site for which the employees pay out of pocket. Additionally, we offer PTO time that employees use for both sick and vacation. Part time employees who work less than 20 hours are not eligible for PTO hours. We also distribute educational health information to our employees via e-mail to assist with their health care management and that we receive from our medical benefits provider.
- None
- nothing
- Providing information on where to obtain a flu shot.
- We offer on-site flu shots with a nominal employee co payment.
- NONE
- We list articles and preventive Tips in our Bi-weekly employee newsletter.
- None.
- 1. Articles in our company newsletter 2. Supervisors encourage sick employees to go home so they don't spread colds/flu 3. Post reminders on our health/safety bulletin board.
- We have hand sanitizers throughout our plant.
- Using disinfectant phone wipes, sending home sick employees, allowing top performing employees to work from home when ill.
- Our medical plan covers preventive care physical visits. We also take a soft approach to absenteeism and encourage our staff to stay at home and take care of themselves when they are ill.
- Distribute information to all employees on how to prevent the spread of the flu.
- none
- Ask employees not to come to work when they're ill. Ask supervisors to send employees home if they do.
- Posting with information
- None at this time.
- nothing else in addition
- Helpful tips and hints are displayed in lunch rooms and near copy machines (e.g. washing hands, etc.)



- Provide wellness education and information monthly
- We provide anti-bacterial soap in all of the restrooms, OTC medicine in our first aid room, and tissues.
- We have not done anything at this time
- We have installed hand sanitizer near the restrooms.
- We offer on-site flu shots to all employees. Employees accrue sick time based on service.
- None
- None
- None
- Provide Antibacterial soap at all sinks and will be providing antibacterial hand wash stations during winter season.
- Informational articles re: hand washing, etc.
- We have installed Purell hand sanitizing stations throughout the office.
- We ask that anyone coming in with a fever to go home and we wipe all surfaces and phones down with disinfecting wipes. We also have a very generous sick time policy to cover for any illnesses.
- Flu shots. We offer PTO to all regular employees after 6 months of employment.
- We actually share the cost of the flu shots and offer on-site vaccination. We also have installed anti-bacterial cleansers and lotions throughout the plant and office to promote cleaning hands before using shared keyboards, etc.
- We ask employees not to come to work when they are sick.
- Anti-bacterial hand lotions available in all public areas and restrooms.
- Co-pay on the flu shots which are given on premises, available to family members also. Supply Purell in all washrooms. Encourage the use of supplied antibacterial wipes for phones, keyboards, etc.
- Provide disinfectant lotion for hands, tissues for use, encourage employees to stay home when sick
- Flu shots are offered thru the County at \$5. We also posted the Workplace sheets from your last newsletter, to encourage hand washing, etc. I tried to

get Purell dispensers placed throughout the office, but management did not approve.

- Throughout our building we have hand sanitizer liquid for associates to use.
- Education in preventive maintenance and infection control practices.
- We leave this all up to the individual
- Wellness newsletters and paycheck attachments
- Covered under health care program
- None.
- Postings encouraging employees to wash hands frequently. Purchased 'Hand Sanitizers' dispensers and placed in office and on plant floor.
- None
- Posters from ERC and CDC. Purell hand sanitizers throughout the building.
- Discounted Flu shots
- To no. 1 above, we offer flu shots and pay 2/3rds and the EE pays 1/3.
- We ensure that cleaning company does an excellent job sanitizing restroom and public/lobby areas of our offices. If an employee does come to work and is basically 'toughing it out' w/the flu...we make certain to send them home, rather than allow the opportunity for others to 'catch the bug'.
- Conducted a health fair.
- None.
- Offered on-site flu shots with reduced cost payroll deducted.
- Purchased Instant Hand Sanitizer's and placed throughout company.
- One concern we have this year. Our scheduled flu shot event was cancelled because our resource sis not have the supplies.
- Regarding Question 2, we have paid PTO. In addition to flu shots and paid leave, our Infection Control Nurse provides educational information and updates regarding flu season to all staff via our employee newsletter and all-organization voice mails.
- Flu shots were offered on site at our main office and we will reimburse for shots received by an employee's personal physician.
- Education on how to prevent the flu



- We did offer Flu Shots, but the employee had to pay a portion of the cost. We do offer sick days to all full time employees.
- We provide disinfectant wipes to clean phones and other equipment that is shared. We distribute monthly health newsletters.
- Promoting cross training within depts. so if an employee needs to stay home because they have the flu, they are more likely to do so, because other staff can cover their duties/responsibilities. This helps to cut down on employees spreading their germs.
- Universal precautions trained and used by all staff.