

To: All VHA Employees
From: The National Partnership Council
Re: VHA's Employee Influenza Vaccination Program

The influenza season is quickly approaching. The National Partnership Council (NPC), including AFGE, NAGE, NFFE, SEIU, and UAN, encourages all staff, including trainees and volunteers, to get a free influenza vaccine from VA or be vaccinated by another provider this flu season.

Studies show that health care workers infected with influenza virus can pose a significant risk to their patients, to their families, and to each other. Unvaccinated health care workers are recognized as a cause of influenza outbreaks. On average, each influenza infected person will spread infection to approximately two other people. This is why the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Joint Commission recommend that all health care workers receive the influenza vaccine: to protect their patients, themselves and their families.

VHA has had an employee influenza vaccination program since 1988. Last year, 65% of VHA employees were vaccinated, up 10% in the last two years. While this is unprecedented improvement in a health care systems' employee vaccination rate, VHA has set a goal of reaching 80% by 2011. The NPC supports VHA's employee influenza vaccination program, but cautions that employee privacy must not be compromised through any mandate that employees sign declination forms, report vaccinations received outside VA, or disclose their social security numbers to receive VA vaccines.

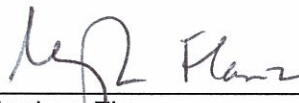
We believe that influenza vaccine protects our entire VA community — veteran patients, employees, volunteers and trainees. We strongly encourage all of you to be vaccinated.

Sincerely,

The National Partnership Council



Alma L. Lee
AFGE National VA Council
Labor Co-Chair



Meghan Flanz
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Labor-Management Relations
Management Co-Chair

Susan Anderson, NAGE
Alberta Franklin, AFGE
Elaine Gerace, SEIU
Walter Hall, OGC
Rosell Knight, VHA
Claudia Moore, NAGE
Christine Polnak, SEIU
Robert Redding, NFFE-IAM

Alice Staggs, RN, UAN
Donna Terrell, VBA
Michael Walcoff, VBA
Veronica Wales, VBA
Richard Wannemacher, NCA
William Wetmore, AFGE
Vivieca Wright, VHA