

2013-2014 INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION POSITION STATEMENT



**TAKE ACTION:
GET IMMUNIZED**



At AHS, we value safety and accountability. We are each responsible for the quality of patient care and the safety of our work environment. We need to take action to protect ourselves, our patients, our coworkers and our families from influenza and other communicable diseases.

Along with routine practices such as performing hand hygiene, getting immunized and reporting our immunization to AHS are essential for our workforce and physicians. **HERE IS WHY:**

- You are *more likely* to get influenza if you do not get immunized.
- **YOU CAN SPREAD INFLUENZA** to your patients, your coworkers, and your loved ones 1-2 days *before you know you are sick*.
- **THERE WERE 53 INFLUENZA OUTBREAKS** in acute and long-term care settings in Alberta between August 2012 and May 2013. **No patient should get influenza from our staff while in our care.** It is unacceptable to spread influenza to AHS patients or coworkers.
- **PATIENT MORTALITY GOES DOWN** when more healthcare workers are immunized against influenza.
- **THE ANNUAL INFLUENZA VACCINE IS SAFE AND EFFECTIVE.** The vaccine protects us against the strains of the influenza virus that are most likely to be circulating in the upcoming season.
- **WE NEED TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE BEEN IMMUNIZED** in order to effectively manage outbreaks. If you are immunized by Public Health or a Third Party, it is critical that you report your immunization to AHS by signing the consent on your Public Health Immunization Record or by submitting a Notification of Third Party Immunization Form. Your immunization status will determine if you will be *allowed to work* on your unit during an outbreak.
- **WHEN YOU GET SICK, PATIENT CARE IS AFFECTED.** In 2012/13, AHS staff missed 95 days of work because they caught influenza at work. This lost-time costs AHS in Workers Compensation Board claims and replacement staffing costs. When staff are off sick, team workloads increase and the staffing levels required for quality patient care are harder to maintain.
- By being immunized, you contribute to the overall **IMMUNITY** of our workforce and our communities.

AHS LEADERS: It is part of your leadership role to promote influenza immunization. Here is how you can take action:

- Get immunized and tell others that you did.
- Educate your teams about immunization. Visit Insite and search for Influenza to learn more.
- Tell staff that getting immunized and reporting our immunization to AHS is essential for the AHS workforce.
- Be proactive and ask your Workplace Health & Safety (WHS) Director about the immunization rates for your area. Share this information to encourage your team to get immunized.
- Remind staff that it is unacceptable to spread influenza to AHS patients or coworkers.
- Provide additional communication/translation of this information to workers that may have barriers with English as second language.