

Keeping Healthcare Personnel Influenza Vaccination Rates High

Strategies from Sleepy Eye Medical Center (SEMC), Critical Access Hospital · Sleepy Eye, MN

Thank you for the invitation! Although we're unable to join the call, we're glad to share the strategies that have worked for us.

90%

HCP flu vaccination
2024–25 season (Q4 2024–Q1 2025)

88%

HCP flu vaccination
2025–26 season (Q4 2025–Q1 2026)

Our approach: **make the flu vaccine as easy and convenient as possible for every staff member.** We focus on removing barriers and clearly communicating expectations that help protect our patients, coworkers, and community.

What We Do

1. Team-based leadership

Led by our Employee Health & Infection Prevention Manager (RN), with a team drawn from nearly every department, including Business Office, HIM, Clinic Nursing, and Pharmacy.

2. Drop-in employee flu clinics

Two employee clinics in October, held in a designated room during set hours. Staff come whenever it fits their schedule, with no appointment needed.

3. Paperwork sent out in advance

Consent forms are emailed ahead of time so staff can complete them whenever it suits them, with extra copies at every clinic for anyone who forgets. The visit itself takes only a few minutes.

4. Mobile flu cart

On clinic days, our Employee Health nurse wheels a cart around the building and vaccinates staff in their own office or unit if they can't get away.

5. Family-friendly, themed community clinics

Community flu-shot-only clinics offer scheduled **drive-up** and **family flu clinic** options. Staff can bring their kids and get vaccinated together, and a seasonal theme with small prizes (stickers, pencils, bandages, tattoos) makes it fun.

6. Peer vaccination on every shift

Nurses can vaccinate each other during their own shifts, then complete and turn in the paperwork. Night shift doesn't have to come in during the day, and busy day staff don't have to leave the floor.

Clear Expectations: Our Employee Influenza Vaccination Policy

- **Vaccine at no cost.** SEMC provides the vaccine free to every employee, and the Business Office credits any co-pay or uncovered charge.
- **Everyone is included.** Employees, students, interns, contracted staff, and consultants must be vaccinated, provide proof (from another provider or MHC), or sign a **declination form** by **November 1**.
- **New hires** are vaccinated or show proof during orientation when vaccine is available.
- **Masking for those who decline.** Unvaccinated staff wear a mask within 6 feet of patients, family members, or susceptible coworkers, and in patient and clinical care areas, throughout flu season (October 1–March 31).

Key Takeaways for Other CAHs

- **Bring the vaccine to staff.** Offer drop-in hours plus a mobile cart so no one has to leave their work area.
- **Cover every shift.** Peer-to-peer vaccination by nurses reaches night shift and staff who can't get to a daytime clinic.
- **Remove small hassles.** Send paperwork out ahead of time and cover the vaccine cost for staff.
- **Involve every department.** A cross-departmental team spreads the message and shares the work.
- **Make it family-friendly.** Clinics staff can attend with their children build participation and community goodwill.
- **Pair convenience with accountability.** A clear deadline, declination, and masking requirement set the expectation.

Questions? We're happy to connect!

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