

Reading Health System Employee Flu Vaccine Campaign Save Lives...Immunize!

Each year, more than 36,000 people die and another 226,000 are hospitalized due to the flu. These are preventable deaths and illnesses.

This year, **Reading Health System will require an annual flu vaccine for all employees and associates of the system.** The implementation of this mandatory flu vaccine policy demonstrates our commitment to protect the safety and health of our patients, many of whom already have weakened immune systems, as well as visitors, co-workers and our families.

Vaccination for health care workers has been recommended for years, yet vaccination rates remain at 45 percent nationally. At Reading Health System, voluntary programs have not been effective at markedly increasing vaccination rates. During the 2013-2014 flu season, our overall participation rate for those receiving the vaccine was 72%. Making the flu vaccine mandatory is a step that has also been taken by many of the health care systems in our region and in many hospitals throughout the nation. In Pennsylvania, many hospitals or health systems have already adopted a mandatory influenza vaccination policy with more planning to implement this season. The following regional hospitals have already adopted a mandatory influenza vaccination policy:

- Abington Memorial Hospital
- Lancaster General Hospital
- Lehigh Valley Health Network
- St Joseph Medical Center (Reading)
- University of Pennsylvania Health System
- Wellspan Health System (Ephrata Community Hospital)

This policy applies to employees and associates of Reading Health System. Associates include students, vendors, volunteers, agency workers, temporary contractors and others who work within our environment. Reading Health System includes: Reading Hospital, The Reading Hospital Medical Group, Reading Professional Services (RPS), Reading Health Partners, The Highlands at Wyomissing, and Berkshire Health Partners (BHP). Simply put, receiving an annual influenza vaccination is a condition of employment and volunteering with RHS. A request for exemption is available for religious or certain specific medical conditions.

As an EMT program requirement we ask that you submit proof of influenza immunization. Proof of immunization may include a physician's note or a copy of documentation indicating the vaccine was received. Proof of immunization must include identifiers that list your name specifically as the influenza recipient. This proof, in addition to all registration materials and tuition are due 2 weeks prior to the start of class. You are encouraged to reach out to the Admissions Officer @ 484-628-0116 if you have questions or concerns.