

Colleagues,

Now that there is a chill in the morning air, the leaves are changing colors, the clocks have rolled back to Standard Time again, and you have replaced the batteries in all your smoke detectors (you did do this, didn't you?), it is time for one more action -- getting your annual seasonal flu shot.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) recommend routine annual influenza vaccination for most people aged 6 months and older with a few [exceptions](#). While getting your flu shot in October is recommended, it is not too late to protect yourself as the peak of flu season usually occurs between December and February, and flu viruses can linger through May.

Maintaining a healthy workforce for the coming months is particularly important as we face the possibility of a recurrence of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in U.S. poultry and the resultant prospect of employee deployments associated with a response while endeavoring to maintain our day-to-day work. While we cannot predict what may occur, having a healthy workforce increases the chances of handling any challenges that may come. Likewise, reducing the opportunity for flu to spread within APHIS workplaces or within your families is prudent. So please, if you haven't already, please consider getting vaccinated.

The [APHIS Seasonal Influenza Factsheet](#) provides a number of options for obtaining the vaccine. APHIS has worked with Federal Occupational Health to obtain 2,500 doses of the flu shot primarily for use by the HPAI responders. Since September 28, only 356 doses have been used, so I strongly encourage each of you to consider getting your seasonal flu shot.

With so many options available, I hope you will take advantage of one of them.

Here's to your health!

Sincerely,

***Rob***

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