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STATE OF LOUISIANA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS



Roxane A. Townsend, M.D.
SECRETARY

September 20, 2007

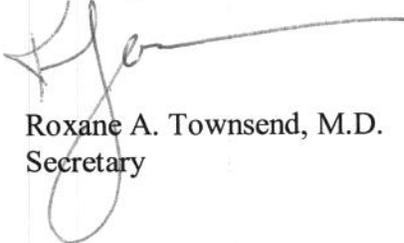
To Hospital Administrators and Employee Health Nurses:

As you know, influenza is a serious illness that causes an average of 36,000 deaths and 114,000 hospitalizations in the United States each year. As a major health care provider in your community, you have an opportunity to play a leading role in preventing the spread of influenza. It is our responsibility as health care providers to do all that we can to prevent an influenza outbreak. To this end, many health care institutions have been actively working along with the Office of Public Health toward preparing for a pandemic influenza event.

This year the Office of Public Health will be hosting a mass influenza immunization drill on October 25, 2007. The purpose of the drill is to evaluate how many immunizations can be administered per hour. This would become very important in the event of a pandemic influenza outbreak and appropriate vaccine became available. There will be clinics set up in every region of the state. At each of the nine regional sites, community health care partners are encouraged to participate. The Office of Public Health is requesting that hospitals support these efforts by identifying a nurse who could assist in this drill as a vaccinator. These volunteer nurses will receive 'real time' training and the hospitals that participate will receive recognition for their community support in all of the OPH advertisements. Additionally, health care family members are eligible for free immunizations at a time that is convenient to the employee (during the clinic hours).

The Office of Public Health will provide educational materials on topics such as influenza self-care and caring for a person with influenza. Additionally, the OPH website www.dhh.state.la.us/publications.asp?ID=265&Detail=1428 contains useful information on healthcare worker influenza immunization programs. You can make a difference in preventing the spread of influenza in your community. We hope that you will consider participating as a volunteer. For more information or to sign up as a volunteer organization, please contact your regional medical director (see attached).

Sincerely,



Roxane A. Townsend, M.D.
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