

Business News & Notes

Helping Workers And Companies Fight The Flu

(NAPSA)—There is hopeful news for business owners who want to help employees stay safe and healthy and keep their business running until the flu season has passed.

With a few practical steps, it may be possible to reduce the chances of catching H1N1 or the regular seasonal flu and having it spread through the workforce.

To help, here are some tips from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Society for Human Resource Management, or SHRM.

Individuals should:

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle through rest, diet, exercise and relaxation.

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if soap and water are not available.

- Avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes.

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough and sneeze into your elbow.

- Keep frequently touched common surfaces clean—surfaces such as telephones, computer keyboards and doorknobs. Consider placing disinfectant wipes in central locations for employees to use.

- Don't use other workers' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment.

- If you are sick with a flulike illness, stay home.

According to SHRM, companies should:

- Develop an employee communication strategy. "Communication is extremely important," says Deb Keary, director of human resources at SHRM. Keary recom-



Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand cleaner can help to fight the flu.

mends keeping an open line of communication with employees, updating them at least once a week on the status of the 2009 H1N1 virus "and more often than that if the situation gets worse."

- Keep track of H1N1-related school closings. "County-wide school closings, for example, can affect the workplace," says Keary. "Parents would have to stay home and that would affect the business."

- Make sure that your organization has a plan in place for how it will function in the event of an emergency. Identify and meet regularly with the key individuals who will serve as your organization's emergency response team.

- Monitor the H1N1 virus situation and follow the advice of leading health agencies.

For more information and to download a "Step Up to the H1N1 Pandemic" HR checklist, visit SHRM's H1N1 Flu News & Resources Web site at www.shrm.org/SwineFluNews.