

Flu shot programs are one of those benefits that your employees probably love to hate. But while few people enjoy getting poked with a needle, even fewer enjoy getting the flu.

Flu shot programs are one of the most prevalent wellness-related offerings by employers and benefit plan sponsors.

According to *Workplace Wellness Trends: 2017 Survey*

*Results*, 83.1% of U.S. respondents offer free or discounted flu shots. Those organizations reported a 47.5% participation rate. And 18.2% offered employees an incentive to participate in the flu shot program.

Although some people may wait for the colder months to get their shots, flu activity usually peaks between January and March, and the Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone six months and older should get a flu vaccine by the end of October, if possible.

There are business reasons for encouraging vaccination for the flu—CDC estimates the flu is responsible for the loss of close to 17 million workdays each flu season.

Some workplaces, particularly health care employers, make flu shots mandatory, and a number of states also have passed laws making the vaccines mandatory for health care workers. Employers

and plan sponsors should consult with legal counsel to ensure a mandatory flu shot program doesn't run afoul of laws such as Title

VII of the Civil Rights Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act or conflict with requirements for collective bargaining.



### CDC offers these tips for employers that want to host an on-site flu vaccination clinic:

- Identify a flu vaccination coordinator and/or team. Determine if you will need to contract with an outside provider of vaccination services.
- Provide sufficient and accessible flu vaccinations in as many business locations as possible.
- Ask managers and supervisors to allow employees to attend an on-site flu vaccination clinic as part of their workday and without having to go off the clock.
- Consider offering vaccinations to employees' families.
- Use incentives such as offering the vaccine at low or no cost, provide refreshments at the clinic or hold a contest to reward the department with the highest percentage of vaccinated employees.
- Set an example by getting managers and business leaders to get vaccinated first.