

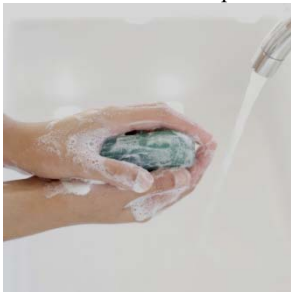
# Crossroads Community Services Board Employee Newsletter

Volume 85 Special Issue September 2009

This Special Employee Newsletter is being provided based on information received by the agency related to the regular seasonal influenza and H1N1 (commonly called Swine) Flu.

## Staying Healthy- Important Actions to Take

- Every time you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and throw used tissues in the trash.
- Wash your hands often, especially after you cough or sneeze.
  - Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Use alcohol-based hand cleaners if soap and water are not readily available.
  - Wash your hands before and after preparing food or eating, after using the restroom, before and after touching your nose, eyes or mouth, and after touching items that may have been exposed to bodily fluids.



### **WASH YOUR HANDS!!**

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean surfaces at work that have frequent hand contact. Use cleaning agents currently used.
- Get vaccinated for seasonal flu. This minimizes your risk of catching the flu or if you do, minimizes the impact on you and others. **VACCINATION IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE PREVENTION FOR INFLUENZA. GET THE VACCINE!**



### **GET THE VACCINE!!**

- Get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it becomes available, if you are at risk for H1N1 flu complications.
- Persons at higher risk for influenza are:

- Pregnant women.
- Children under age 5 and adult over the age of 65.
- For H1N1, the range most often affected are those from age 5-25.
- People with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes, immune system disorders).
- If at higher risk for complications from the flu, discuss with your physician what you need to do if you get sick.

- If you have symptoms of influenza-like illness, **DO NOT** come to work, until you are medically cleared and out of the contagious stage. This is usually 24 hours after the fever has resolved and without the use of fever reducing medications. This is usually a 3-5 day period. Also, if family members in your household have influenza like symptoms, you should stay home as well. This is true in the contagious stage and has same criteria as above.
- If you are at work and have symptoms of influenza like illness, you will be sent home by the supervisor. **DO NOT** come back to work, until you are medically cleared and out of the contagious stage. This is usually 24 hours after the fever has resolved and without the use of fever reducing medications. This is usually a 3-5 day period.
- **The best way to prevent the spread of any influenza is to keep sick people away from well people.**



### **COVER UP WITH A TISSUE!**

- However, you cannot under FMLA or other leave policy stay at home to keep from catching the flu nor can you use medical leave to stay at home with children or family members who are not sick. This is especially true if schools close down. You may use other leave such as annual leave or leave without pay (see policy reference on next page).

## Medical or other Leave

Employees may take medical leave time off just as they do for other medical reasons.

FMLA- Family and Medical Leave Act

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- If an employee has worked for Crossroads for at least 12 months, has worked at least 1250 hours during that 12 month period, and works at a location where at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.
- If staff do not meet that criteria then, they may take accumulated medical leave or leave without pay.

Under FMLA:

- An employee must give notice as soon as possible (law says 30 days but that may not be practical in an emergency).
- An employee is required to provide medical documentation for the need for the leave, including periodic re-certification.
- An employee must give periodic reports as to a return to work date.
- An employee is required to submit a return to fitness duty report from a physician attesting that he/she is no longer contagious or can return to work.

Based upon the severity of the local area influenza situation, Crossroads' supervisors will take the following actions:

1. Screen employees who report to work.
  - a. Managers should ask or observe employees if they have influenza like symptoms such as fever, chills, cough and/or sore throat.
  - b. If employees have such symptoms, they should be directed to return home and follow the guidelines noted above.
2. Social distancing may be recommended to keep persons apart during the work day. Recommendations may be to avoid crowded work spaces, keep apart from other employees or clients (6 feet is recommended distance), and cancelling non-essential travel.
3. Work with local government, health departments and healthcare providers in supporting their recommendations for action.
4. Based on severity of the local influenza situation, some FMLA requirements may be waived.



**Read and Understand!!**

## Crossroads Personnel Policies should be Consulted

There are several Crossroads' policies that apply to the influenza or leave situations. All Employees should refer to these in their personnel Policy Manual and do so as soon as possible.

*This includes:*

*303- Annual Leave Benefits, page 21*

*307- Medical Leave Benefits, page 25*

*601- Medical Leave, page 51*

*602- Family Leave, page 52*

*603- Personal Leave, page 54*

*604- Compensatory Leave, page 55*

*704- Attendance and Punctuality, page 60*

Crossroads is encouraging **all** employees especially those who work in situations where a number of people are close together and spend time in close contact with persons in the community (group homes, day programs, clinics and offices). Basically **ALL** employees are encouraged to get the seasonal flu vaccination. It protects you, other staff, individuals receiving services, your family and the community.

Crossroads has arranged with the Piedmont Health District to make the seasonal flu shots available to you as an employee. However, no date has been set yet as the Health Department has not been advised as to when they will receive the flu vaccine.

Therefore you are encouraged to get the seasonal flu shots as soon as possible if you have other sources for them. These might be a drug store, your primary care physician or other facility where they advertise flu shots. Many staff have already done so and have not had to pay co-pays for them.

So you have two ways to get the seasonal flu shot:

1. Health Department at the Crossroads Bush River location (date to be determined). **(MAY BE OCTOBER)**
2. From another source such as drug store, healthcare facility, primary care physician.

In order to facilitate #2, Crossroads will reimburse **your** co-pay up to a maximum of \$10.00. Again this is for **your** seasonal flu shot **only**. You can submit to your supervisor on the agency's blue reimbursement for. A receipt detailing amount and who the flu shot was given to is required.

Once the Health Department schedules our seasonal flu shot, the agency will no longer reimburse for flu shots beyond that date.



**NOTE: At this time we have no information on the H1N1 (swine) flu shots or when or whether they will be available to us. The government is still testing the vaccine as to dosage and determining a distribution date. We will inform you as we get the information.**

**NOTE: Employees include part and full time staff.**