



# DeKalb Medical

**DATE:** August 30, 2011

**TO:** DeKalb Medical Employees, Physicians and Contractors

**FROM:** Eric Norwood, President and Chief Executive Officer

**RE:** **Annual Influenza Immunization**

As healthcare workers, we have a responsibility to protect our patients by making sure that we are immunized against influenza each year. Many studies have shown that healthcare workers can be a primary cause of influenza outbreaks in healthcare settings. We can bring influenza into our hospital and expose patients and their families to the illness. We can inadvertently spread the flu to our friends, family and local community. For this reason, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual influenza immunization for healthcare workers.

For additional information regarding the influenza vaccine, a Computer Based Learning (CBL) is currently assigned and will be a part of the annual requirements for completion.

Beginning, October 1, 2011, DeKalb Medical will offer free influenza immunizations for all employees, physicians, and volunteers. Due to the importance of protecting our patients as well as ourselves and families, the Board of DeKalb Medical has made participation in the influenza vaccination program a condition of employment and a requirement for members of the medical staff, for the first time this year. Many other metro Atlanta healthcare systems have already made this change to promote patient and employee safety.

All employed healthcare personnel who decline seasonal influenza immunization will be required to provide documentation of the reason. The acceptable reasons for declination include:

- Vaccine taken at another location (documentation must be provided)
- Medical Exemption due to: (physician documentation is required)
  - Severe allergic reaction to the influenza vaccine
  - Allergy to eggs
  - Guillian-Barré Syndrome
  - Other medical reason
- Religious Exemption (written statement on letterhead from authorized representative for your religious beliefs is required along with contact information)

All employees must participate in the influenza vaccination program by December 1, 2011.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this requirement, please see your department manager. Employee Health is also available to answer questions about the vaccine.