



# Quality Quest *for* Health of Illinois

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## **Local Hospitals Join Effort to Reduce Number of Flu-Related Deaths**

Peoria, IL – OSF Saint Francis Medical Center, Methodist Medical Center of Illinois, Proctor Hospital, and Pekin Hospital are four of twenty regional hospitals that are publicly reporting the percentage of employees who have been immunized for the seasonal flu as part of a flu reporting project developed by Quality Quest for Health of Illinois that started in 2009. In observance of **National Influenza Vaccination Week (Dec. 4 to 10)**, Quality Quest has its first *Flu Shot Percentage Report* for the 2011-2012 flu season available at [www.qualityquest.org](http://www.qualityquest.org) for residents to view. The report starts with October 2011 percentages and will be updated monthly through March 2012. The report will include a trend graph for each hospital.

Higher percentages are expected this year as several hospitals have implemented universal employee vaccination policies. Exceptions to these policies include individuals who have a medical or religious reason not to participate. Those who do not get vaccinated must wear a mask.

The following hospitals are participating in the flu reporting project for 2011-2012: Decatur Memorial Hospital\*; Fairfield Memorial Hospital; Genesis Medical Center, Silvis; Hoopston Regional Health Center; Illini Community Hospital (Blessing Health System), Pittsfield; Massac Memorial Hospital, Metropolis; Methodist Medical Center of Illinois, Peoria; OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center, Rockford\*; OSF Saint Francis Medical Center, Peoria\*; OSF Saint James - John W. Albrecht Medical Center, Pontiac\*; OSF Saint Joseph Medical Center, Bloomington\*; OSF Saint Mary Medical Center, Galesburg\*; Ottawa Regional Hospital and Healthcare Center; Pana Community Hospital; Pekin Hospital; Proctor Hospital, Peoria\*; St. John's Hospital, Springfield; St. Mary's Hospital, Decatur\*; Union County Hospital, Anna; Washington County Hospital, Nashville.

*(\*Indicates hospital has a universal vaccination policy.)*

### **How does public reporting help?**

Flu immunization among healthcare workers is important for the continued safety and care of patients. Approximately 36,000 deaths in the U.S. each year are caused by the seasonal flu, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

(more)

“OSF had been working on (improving employee flu vaccination rates) for many years using all the best strategies — education, incentives, requiring declination forms and reasons — and we still weren’t seeing the performance we should be achieving to protect patients,” said Dr. Ralph Velazquez, Senior Vice President of Care Management at OSF Healthcare System.

Velazquez recommended Quest develop an employee vaccination rate report and data collection began in 2009 with participating hospitals. Each season since, the percentage of vaccinated employees for each hospital has been plotted along a thermometer, with the higher performing hospitals showing at the top.

“No one wanted to be at the bottom of that bulb,” said Tim Stone, Chief Operating Officer at Decatur Memorial Hospital. The thermometer graph circulated through each organization. Some posted it on bulletin boards or in elevators.

For the first time, providers saw how they compared to others, knowing that this information was publicly reported on the Quality Quest website. The data externalized the issue, changing the discussion to one regarding the organization’s reputation, according to Dr. Gail Amundson, Quest President and CEO.

“Public reporting has consistently been shown to be a significant driver for change. It shines a light on healthcare, creating transparency, which then creates provider competition based on quality,” she said. “What gets measured, gets managed. We all strive to be the best. Public reporting makes gaps visible so that we can improve. If we didn’t time our race, we’d all think we were the fastest people in the world.”

“The emergence of consumer-driven healthcare has brought about the need for greater transparency and public reporting in order to provide vital information to the public so that informed healthcare decisions can be made,” Stone added.

The Joint Commission challenges hospitals to meet the gold standard vaccination rate of 95 percent for healthcare workers. During the 2010-2011 influenza season, coverage for influenza vaccination among healthcare workers was estimated at **63.5 percent**, according to the [CDC](#). The average rate for the participating hospitals in the Quest region during the 2009/2010 season was **76 percent**. The rate jumped to **81 percent** during the 2010/2011 flu season.

“We expect even higher numbers of vaccinated hospital employees during this flu season,” Amundson said.

### **About Quality Quest for Health of Illinois**

Quality Quest for Health of Illinois is a non-profit healthcare collaborative working together to transform healthcare in our state. We bring physicians, hospitals, insurers, employers, patients, and families together to focus on creating healthier communities with better patient outcomes. We collect data related to specific Quest projects and report performance information to the medical community and the public. The information helps providers compare their performance to peers and regional / national

benchmarks and gives consumers data to make informed healthcare decisions. For more information, visit [qualityquest.org](http://qualityquest.org). Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

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## **Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs**

From: [www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm)

The **single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get [vaccinated](#)** each year, but good health habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu. There also are [flu antiviral drugs](#) that can be used to treat and prevent the flu.

### **1. Avoid close contact.**

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

### **2. Stay home when you are sick.**

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

### **3. Cover your mouth and nose.**

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

### **4. Clean your hands.**

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

### **5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.**

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

### **6. Practice other good health habits.**

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.