

Trustmark Health Bulletin:

Four Reasons Why H1N1 Should Concern U.S. Employers

September 2009

Different strains of influenza come and go every year. But 2009 may mark a worldwide pandemic such as not experienced for nearly 100 years (*source: pandemicflu.gov*). The bulk of seasonal flu cases usually takes place between Oct. 1 and March 30, the official flu season. But this year, with H1N1, the season is already underway.

- 1** Half the U.S. population could become infected with the H1N1 virus. Up to 1.8 million people could be hospitalized. And as many as 90,000 could die. That's more than double the number who die of seasonal flu. (*source: President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology, Aug. 7, 2009*)
- 2** Unlike seasonal influenza, which strikes the elderly and others with weak immune systems, the H1N1 flu has sickened healthy, young adults. With the new school semester, the potential for rapid spread of H1N1 flu is high. (*source: Washington Post, Aug. 28, 2009*)
- 3** The U.S. may not have as many H1N1 flu vaccines available as originally anticipated. Approximately 45 million doses will be available mid-October, down from the original plan of 120 million doses. (*source: CBS News, Aug. 17, 2009*)
- 4** Most people's immune systems have never been exposed to any influenza strain closely related to the H1N1 strain, which first began to surface last spring. (*source: Stanford University, Aug. 31, 2009*)