Dear :

The **20XX-XX** influenza season is upon us and, as you know, employee influenza vaccine distribution began in **MONTH**. I am writing to reiterate the critical importance of influenza vaccination for all health care personnel (HCP) as the single most important tool available to prevent transmission of influenza in health care settings. During the **20XX-XX** influenza season, our vaccination rate at **XXXXX** was **XX%**. We must do better.

Vaccination not only helps to assure patient safety in health care settings, but also benefits you and your family members. Achieving high influenza vaccination rates among HCP is a critical step in preventing health care transmission of influenza and protecting patients. The Infection Prevention Committee has considered various strategies to improve our employee vaccination rate, including a recommendation for mandatory vaccinations, or requiring non-vaccinated employees to wear a mask. In advance of these drastic steps, we first request that you voluntarily acquiesce to our request.

Some important points to consider:

* Flu has arrived early in Minnesota with an increase in hospitalizations and outbreaks in schools and long-term care facilities. Nationally, the influenza **XXX** strain has been most common, and it appears to be well matched to this year’s vaccine. Here in Minnesota, influenza A/H3, influenza B, and influenza A/H1 are all circulating. We have had many positive cases come through our doors.
* Patient safety – you can spread the influenza virus 24 hours before you have any symptoms. Even if you think that you’re not in a high-risk group, most of our patients are at high-risk for complications of influenza and you could easily spread influenza to them if you are not vaccinated. It is possible to spread the influenza virus to patients even if you don’t feel ill or only feel mildly ill.
* If you don’t like needles, we still have the nasal vaccine available.
* It’s free; it’s safe. Influenza vaccine has undergone rigorous safety testing, has been determined safe by the FDA, and has a very long standing safety record. Serious adverse reactions are very rare.

Despite the arrival of influenza, it’s not too late to get the vaccination! This is only the beginning of flu season and it’s important to be vaccinated before the worst part of the season arrives. It takes the body up to 14 days to build immunity once a person is vaccinated, so don’t miss the opportunity to keep yourself healthier this flu season. The vaccine is available 24/7 at the hospital nurses’ station or in the ED.

In closing, I want to reiterate the importance of annual vaccination as the single most important action to prevent seasonal influenza infection. **XXXXX** strongly urges all staff to get your influenza immunization to ensure patient health and safety and a healthy and robust health care workforce during the current influenza season. Please reconsider if you have already declined the flu vaccination.

Thank you for working with us to promote the health and safety of our community.

Sincerely,