13 September 2017

To: Medical directors and directors of nursing

Dear Colleague

**Staff influenza vaccination**

Many of you will have already started planning for dealing with the additional pressure on services that winter is likely to bring this year. We are writing to you to emphasise the importance of including a strong focus in these plans on vaccinating staff against influenza.

We would like to thank you for your leadership on this last year. Uptake of seasonal influenza vaccination among healthcare workers in England reached 63.2%, a 12.6% points increase on 2015/2016. While this is encouraging we wish to see more frontline staff vaccinated this year to help protect our families, communities and vulnerable patients.

Many trusts reached the target vaccination rate of 75% last year, and the best performers achieved vaccination rates of over 90%.

Protecting your staff from preventable illness and subsequent absence from work is a key component of maintaining operational performance this winter. NHS Employers and Public Health England have summarised the clinical evidence supporting seasonal influenza vaccination. This is available at [www.nhsemployers.org/case-studies-and-resources/2016/09/flu-fighter-clinical-evidence](http://www.nhsemployers.org/case-studies-and-resources/2016/09/flu-fighter-clinical-evidence)

We are sure you agree that all organisations have room for improvement in staff vaccination rates. All trusts and foundation trusts should be aiming to achieve a minimum vaccination rate of 75%, and those already achieving this level should look to build on their success. We ask that you make a clear commitment at board level to maximising vaccination rates. We also anticipate that your communication leads will be fully engaged with this programme.
Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUIN) guidance

You will be aware that providers will continue to be rewarded via a CQUIN payment based on the proportion of staff vaccinated. NHS England has published a two-year CQUIN covering 2017/18 and 2018/19 which includes an indicator to improve the uptake of flu vaccination by frontline healthcare workers. Providers will receive the full CQUIN payment if they achieve the vaccination rate indicator of 70% of frontline staff in year one, rising to 75% in year two. Full details are available at www.england.nhs.uk/nhs-standard-contract/cquin/cquin-17-19/ . This scheme will apply to all NHS providers, including acute, mental health, community and ambulance trusts, and is part of a health and wellbeing-related improvement programme.

Support and information

To support you in increasing rates of staff vaccination, NHS Employers is running its annual Flu Fighters campaign. Free printed materials are available to order at and digital resources to download at www.nhsemployers.org/flu. Printed materials already ordered from Flu Fighters should be starting to arrive at trusts. We would also like to point you to some excellent good practice examples from NHS Employers which give practical guidance on strategies for increasing vaccine uptake this winter: www.nhsemployers.org/campaigns/flu-fighter/nhs-flu-fighter/case-studies

Should you require any specific support with planning your local vaccination campaign or any other winter arrangements, please contact your NHS Improvement regional relationship manager. For additional support in increasing vaccine uptake please contact NHS Employers at flufighters@nhsemployers.org

Thank you again for your professional leadership on this work.

Yours faithfully

Kathy McLean
Executive Medical Director

Ruth May
Executive Director of Nursing