



Date: February 2, 2011

To: Members, Assembly Health and Senior Services Committee

From: Randy Minniear, Senior Vice President, Government Relations & Policy
Jessica M. Cohen, Director, Government Relations & Policy
Neil Eicher, Deputy Director, Government Relations & Policy

Cc: Nicole Brown, Assembly Democratic Office
Natalie Collins, Assembly Republican Office
David Price, Office of Legislative Services

Re: **A-2172- Requires health care facilities to offer influenza vaccination to their health care workers.**

NJHA would like to offer its support to **A-2172**, sponsored by Assemblyman Conaway (D-Delran). This legislation requires healthcare facilities to offer influenza vaccination to their healthcare workers.

Influenza is a highly contagious disease that can be spread before symptoms appear and results in about 150,000 hospital admissions and 24,000 deaths annually. The CDC has recommended that healthcare workers be vaccinated annually since 1981 yet only half of the professionals who provide direct care get immunized. In recent years, hospitals and healthcare organizations began putting policies into place requiring that employees receive seasonal influenza vaccinations. These policies often have resulted in vaccination rates above 90 percent in these organizations. While the resources needed to implement a mandatory policy are significant, especially in terms of financial and personnel resources, the benefits of protecting vulnerable patients and employees far outweigh the costs.

The NJHA Board of Directors recently endorsed a position based on an American Hospital Association policy on flu vaccinations for healthcare workers. The policy strongly encourages healthcare workers who provide patient care to receive the flu vaccine, and those who decline should be required to wear a surgical mask while caring for patients. The goal is to protect both the employees and the patients.

We feel this legislation is another mechanism to facilitate those who provide direct patient care to receive their annual flu vaccine. We would urge the committee to support **A-2172**. Please do not hesitate to contact us at (609) 275-4251 if you have any questions or concerns.