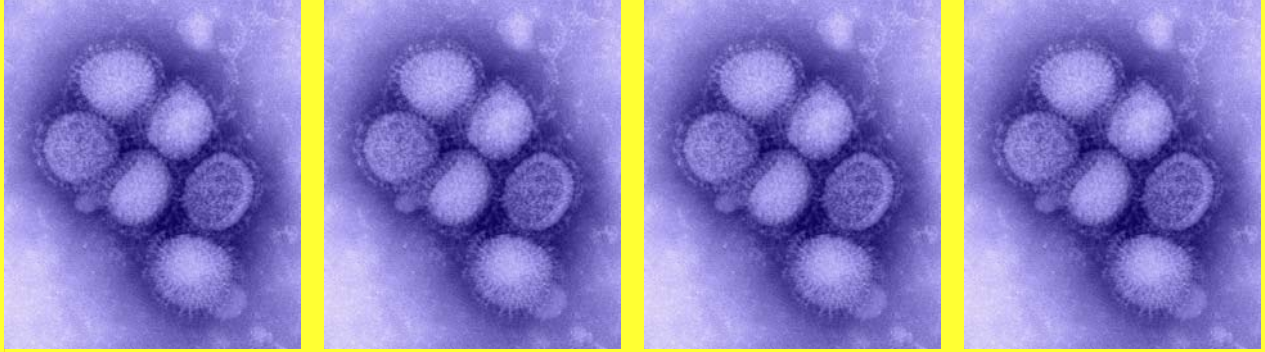


# Silicon Benefits Insider

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## H1N1 and the Workplace



### What Employers and Employees need know about H1N1

H1N1, or swine flu virus, first appeared this past April in Mexico before arriving in the United States. On June 11, 2009 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global pandemic of the novel influenza A (H1N1) was underway by raising the worldwide pandemic alert level to Phase 6.

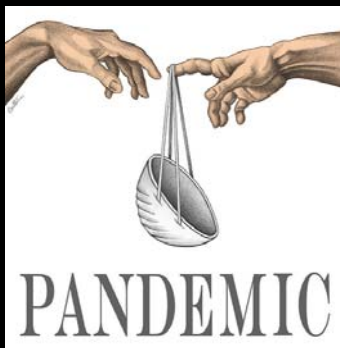
The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates as many as 40% of the workforce may be unable to work due to the flu, coupled by the need for many healthy adults to stay home and care for ill family members.

The CDC further advises that individuals in the workplace should stay home sick for 7 days after getting the flu, or 24 hours after symptoms end, whichever is longer.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) offers the most recent Texas flu information by visiting <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/> in addition to [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org)

Stopping the FLU is up to YOU!

An October 6th news release stated the DSHS provides Texas H1N1 Vaccines totaling 142,400 doses and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's first weekly allocation to states announced last week. Texas had expected to get 237,000 in the first allocation. The bulk of the 142,400 doses for Texas will be sent to some pre-registered doctors, clinics and other providers to vaccinate healthy 2- and 3-year-olds, part of a priority group to receive the vaccine. All of the doses are the FluMist brand nasal spray form of the vaccine. FluMist is only approved for use in vaccinating people 2 years through 49 years of age who are not pregnant and do not have certain chronic health conditions. DSHS officials expect the weekly availability of the vaccine to be low for the first few weeks with volume predicted to increase later this month. They are urging providers and the public to be patient.



What is Novel H1N1 (Swine Flu)?

It is an influenza virus that has never been seen in humans before and is spreading around the world. The 2009 flu pandemic is a global outbreak of a new strain of influenza A virus subtype H1N1, officially referred to as novel H1N1 and commonly called swine flu.

The illness is generally mild, except in some cases for people in higher risk groups, such as those with asthma, diabetes, obesity, heart disease, or who are pregnant or have a weakened immune system.

Like other influenza viruses, novel H1N1 influenza is spread by coughing, sneezing, or touching contaminated surfaces and then touching the nose or mouth. Symptoms, which last up to a week, are similar to those of seasonal flu, and can include fever, sneezing, sore throat, cough, headache, and muscle or joint pains. To avoid spreading the infection, the CDC recommended that those with symptoms stay home from school, work, and crowded settings; in general, wearing facial masks was not recommended, except in healthcare settings.

### What Can Employers DO to prevent the spread of H1N1?

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and CDC with input from the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS), have developed updated guidance and a video for employers to use as they develop or review and update plans to respond to 2009 H1N1 influenza now and during the upcoming fall and winter influenza season. The guidance states that employers should consider and communicate their objectives, which may include reducing transmission among staff, protecting people who are at increased risk of influenza related complications from getting infected with influenza, maintaining business operations, and minimizing adverse effects on other entities in their supply chains.

Employers can download communication material in pdf, podcast, mp3, video or even follow on twitter at the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>.



Employers should review the CDC Guidance for Businesses and Employers To Plan by accessing <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/guidance/> for how to respond to the 2009-2010 Influenza Season and develop or review your Employer Action plan. Periodically go to [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) for updates and communicate the corporate objectives to help keep your employees healthy.

Happy Hand Washing!

Sincerely,

**Silicon Benefits, Inc.**

