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## Asante Makes Small Gain on Flu Shot Goal

Employees across the Asante organization made only incremental gains on this winter's flu shot goal over the holidays, edging upward to 70.87 percent this week from 70.75 percent two weeks ago. Asante leaders have stressed the importance of flu shots to protect the most vulnerable of patients and prevent illness in the workplace.



Asante's Productive Employees Achieving Key Goals (PEAK) awards plan for 2015 includes a \$100 bonus for each full-time employee if the organization reaches its 76 percent flu shot target by April 30.

The vaccination rates of employees at Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center (65.8 percent) and Asante Ashland Community Hospital (66.1 percent) lagged behind those of other Asante entities.

Health officials in Oregon and around the country have advised hospitals to let their employees know that flu shots remain the best bet for avoiding infection, regardless of potential misgivings about this year's vaccine.

And the protection extends to patients, some of whom are considered especially vulnerable to the potentially life-threatening virus.

A [past issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#) that suggests the immunization of hospital staff may protect at least the most at-risk of patients.

Asante's leaders have urged employees to take advantage of the organization's free flu shot program, pointing out that broad-based immunization among health care workers may protect patients and offering a first-time monetary incentive for participation in the vaccination campaign.

Flu season usually peaks in the U.S. between December and February, but outbreaks can begin as early as October and continue as late as May. [The CDC recommends an annual vaccination](#) for everyone 6 months of age and older as the "first and most important step" in avoiding influenza, a preventable disease that can lead to death in some cases. Studies indicate that annual vaccination reduces mortality from the flu by 41 percent.

At Asante, free vaccinations are available to all employees at the Employee Health Department of all three hospitals. This winter's Asante flu shot campaign continues through April 30.