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## Influenza and Pandemic Preparedness Team

To: Our Clients and Friends

August 19, 2009

### Federal Guidelines Encourage Employers to Plan Now for Upcoming Influenza Season

On August 19, 2009, the federal government issued a set of guidelines to encourage employers to prepare now for potentially severe seasonal and H1N1 influenza this fall and winter. Accordingly, Department of Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, and Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano announced a new set of guidelines based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendations.

Pursuant to these guidelines, employers should generally develop plans that encourage employees exhibiting flu-like symptoms to stay home, allow the business to operate with a reduced staff size, and even allow employees who may be at an increased risk for serious complications to work from home.

The CDC and the federal government recommend that employers take, at a minimum, the following actions:

- (1) Review and understand sick leave policies. In certain circumstances, employers should consider adjusting these policies in order to allow an employee with a sick family member or a child whose school is closed to stay at home.
- (2) Encourage employees to be vaccinated against seasonal and H1N1 influenza. If possible, employers should offer on-site vaccinations.
- (3) Cancel non-essential meetings and travel. In addition, if possible, employers should increase employees' work areas in order to space employees further apart.

Taking action now will significantly help business avoid much of the financial impact and panic that could result from what will likely be a severe influenza season.

If you need assistance on preparing or responding to H1N1 issues, if you would like to have a contingency plan in place for future concerns, or if you want additional information about anything contained in this [Influenza and Pandemic Preparedness](#) Bulletin, please speak with your regular [Bryan Cave LLP](#) contact or:

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