



CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
JIMMY PATRONIS
STATE OF FLORIDA

January 18, 2018

Open Letter on Fighting the Flu Epidemic in Florida

**To: Department of Financial Services Staff
Florida Health Insurance Companies and HMOs
Florida Fire Marshals and Fire Departments
Florida State Chartered Banks and Credit Unions
Florida Licensed Insurance Agents
Florida Healthy Kids**

The flu has struck every state in the continental United States this season and has now been labeled an epidemic, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Reports state that there have already been more than 20 pediatric deaths associated with the flu, with two of those deaths occurring right here in Florida. While the flu vaccine does not 100 percent ensure you won't get the flu, it serves as a needed shield for your health.

I urge everyone in our offices across the state at the Department of Financial Services to immediately get their flu shot, if they have not already done so. Please take time to protect your health and the health of your family and colleagues. If you are sick and diagnosed with the flu, please immediately contact your supervisor and do not return to work until you are told it is safe to do so by a doctor.

To our state's banks, insurance companies, and insurance agents, **I urge you to post Public Service Announcements on the flu in your places of business.** Please help us stress the importance of Floridians getting their flu shot and frequently washing their hands to prevent the spread of illness. You can also contact your customer base through emails to remind them of the importance of protecting their health this flu season.

To our state firefighters and first responders, **I urge supervisors to give staff time to get their flu vaccine.** You can visit www.CDC.gov for the latest information on this year's flu epidemic and steps to take to protect yourselves. Please take every possible action to stay healthy. You are often on the frontlines of health care in this country, and our safety depends on you staying healthy and strong.

To Florida Healthy Kids, **please send flu vaccine reminders and symptom notifications through your customer contact system.** We must fight the flu with every tool possible to prevent any pediatric fatality in Florida. As the father of two young boys, it is heartbreaking to think of a terrible virus affecting any child, and we know that unfortunately the young and the elderly are the most vulnerable to the flu virus.

For those of you looking for the most updated guidance on fighting the flu, please visit www.CDC.gov today and take immediate action to help protect Floridians. Your work just may make the difference between life or death for someone this flu season.

Thank you for your time and service in this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Jimmy Patronis'.

Jimmy Patronis
Florida Chief Financial Officer and State Fire Marshal