

Americans Miss 100 Million Work Days and Suffer \$7B in Lost Wages During Flu Season: Survey

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A BY CLEMENTE LISI, *New York Post*

Americans missed a staggering 100 million work days and cost employers nearly \$7 billion in lost wages as a result of the flu last year, according to a new survey.

The findings, released today by the pharmacy chain Walgreens, made a strong case for getting a flu shot this year.

“When it comes to the flu and your own personal calendar, there’s no planning for the many things it could impact,” said Kermit Crawford, Walgreens president of pharmacy, health and wellness.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 13 percent of Americans catch the flu every year -- with active flu seasons seeing closer to 20 percent, equal to 62 million people.

While doctors recommend staying home from work while sick, 80 percent of those surveyed who got the flu last season said they “still went into work” -- likely resulting in co-workers also getting sick.

For working parents, the 32 million school days that the report projected were missed due to flu also translated to missed work.

More than one-third of parents said they needed to make alternative arrangements when their children are sick, while 40 percent would need to take time off from work.

“Immunization rates have climbed and last season more than 40 percent of the US population received

flu shots,” said Crawford. “This report helps to reinforce the importance of getting a flu shot and how that small step toward protection can provide peace of mind when it comes to other important aspects of our lives.”

The survey comes as manufacturers are producing more flu shots than ever this year, with 166 million doses available, compared to 157 million doses last year, The Wall Street Journal reported.

Since only 41 percent of Americans got the flu shot in 2010, pharmacies and supermarkets are trying to attract customers this season with offers of coupons and grocery discounts along with their shots.

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