To increase uptake of flu vaccines and maintain a healthy workforce during the 2016-17 flu season, New York City’s Behavioral Design Team (NYC BDT) partnered with WorkWell NYC—the City’s workplace wellness program within the Office of Labor Relations (OLR)—to design behaviorally-informed emails to encourage New York City employees to visit a worksite flu clinic. Through a randomized controlled trial, the NYC BDT found that the behavioral emails more than doubled click-through rates\(^1\) and statistically increased appointment sign-ups. Most importantly, one version of the email increased vaccine uptake by 5% at worksite locations. Based on these results, WorkWell NYC distributed the behaviorally informed email to the full workforce during the 2017-18 flu season.

Every year during the flu season, millions of New Yorkers get their flu shots. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that about 45% of New Yorkers over the age of 18 received a flu vaccine for the 2016-17 flu season. However, 45% is far from the CDC’s flu vaccination target of 70%, and as a result thousands of flu-related hospitalizations and deaths occur every year.\(^2\)

Within the New York City government workforce, only 21% of employees received flu shots in the 2015-16 flu season. Over 700,000 of the nearly 900,000 City employees, pre-Medicare retirees, and their family members enrolled in City-provided health insurance went unprotected from the flu, risking their own health and spreading the flu to others. As a part of the City’s dedicated effort to lower health care costs and increase the uptake of preventive care, WorkWell NYC sought ways to encourage City employees to get their flu shots.

As part of these efforts, WorkWell NYC partnered with the NYC BDT to develop a behaviorally informed email campaign that encouraged employees to visit a worksite flu clinic. The more effective of the two email designs used the strategy of **enhanced active choice**, whereby employees were asked to make a choice that had an obvious right answer: “Yes, I’ll get a vaccine to reduce my risk of getting and spreading the flu” or “No, I will not get a vaccine, even if it means not protecting myself and others from getting the flu.” By clicking “Yes,” City employees were directed to the website where they could make an appointment to receive a vaccine at their closest worksite clinic. The email also clearly outlined the options for where to get a vaccine using graphics and direct links.

The email campaign was tested using a randomized controlled trial where one-third of employees were assigned to receive the first behaviorally designed email design, one-third were assigned to receive

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\(^1\) The percentage of people who visit a registration page using a hyperlink in the emails sent.

the second behaviorally designed email design, and one-third of employees were assigned to receive WorkWell NYC’s standard email. When the BDT compared outcomes across the groups, the behaviorally informed email that leveraged enhanced active choice outperformed the control email across three outcomes (click rates, pre-registration, and vaccination uptake). Click rates on the registration site link doubled, pre-registrations increased by 12%, and flu vaccine uptake at worksite clinics increased by 5%.

The other behaviorally informed email outperformed the control across click-through rates but did not improve vaccine uptake. Based on these results, WorkWell NYC deployed the behaviorally informed email version that leveraged enhanced choice to all New York City employees during the 2017-18 flu season and saw a 10% increase in worksite flu vaccinations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviorally informed email</th>
<th>Business-as-usual email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>From:</strong> City of New York</td>
<td>WorkWell NYC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Subject:** [FINAL REMINDER] | healthy-workforce.nyc |}

**This is your final reminder:**
Flu season is here. Book your appointment today.
Check the updated calendar. Your worksite may provide free vaccines onsite.

Thank you to the thousands of city employees who have already received their flu vaccines.

Check your choice:
- Yes, I’ll get a vaccine to reduce my risk of getting and spreading the flu.
- No, I will not get a vaccine, even if it means not protecting myself and others from getting the flu.

Which is best for you? (Select below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your worksite</th>
<th>Free</th>
<th>Onsite</th>
<th>Effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advantium Care Physicians</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating pharmacy</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your doctor’s office</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click below:
- Book at your worksite
- Book with AdvantageCare Physicians
- Locate a pharmacy
- Call your in-network doctor or find one here

#GotMyFluShot

*These results are marginally statistically significant at the 10% level (p<0.10).*