

**BREAKING NEWS - October 20, 2009****SSA Managers Already Ignoring Swine Flu MOU**

It hasn't taken managers in the Social Security Administration very long to ignore or disregard a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning the swine flu virus.

The agreement between AFGE and SSA was signed October 8, but the Union is now learning that some management officials are already threatening to fire employees if they refuse to interview a person with the virus.

"Our National Agreement and the law are very clear on this point," says Witold Skwierczynski, the President of Council 220. "Employees NEVER have to put themselves at risk, and dealing with a person who has H1N1 is an imminent danger that nobody has to endure.

"Any manager who tries to force an employee to interview a claimant suffering from swine flu – which is a serious infectious disease which has killed thousands of people – should be fired for putting the health, safety and lives of SSA employees in jeopardy.

"If your manager or supervisor tells you to interview

someone who has the virus, you have the right under the imminent danger principal to decline to conduct the interview if you feel your health is jeopardized. If you decline to conduct the interview, inform your supervisor that you feel there is an imminent danger to your health if you take the interview. If he/she threatens you with termination or some kind of disciplinary action, contact the Union immediately. We will represent you on this issue.

"You should also tell management that you want their order put in writing. Don't accept anything less. That will protect you if we have to file a grievance later, but I think a lot of managers will back down once they realize you're serious and that you are not willing to put your life on the line."

Skwierczynski also said that if interviewing the claimant is so important, "let your supervisor deal with it. I'm sure they won't, and this should encourage them to handle the matter by phone or schedule an appointment for a time when the person isn't contagious."

