

## Fight Flu: Five Reasons To Be Vaccinated

(NAPSA)—The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) urges Americans to see their doctors about receiving influenza vaccinations.

“Many patients are not vaccinated due to concerns that the vaccine will cause the flu, that it will make them sick, or because they don’t consider themselves to be at high risk. We must let patients and physicians know that a flu vaccine will not cause the influenza, and that it is not too late to receive a vaccination, even if it is administered late into the season,” said Janet McElhaney, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine and Director of the Glennan Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology, Eastern Virginia Medical School.

To help, the experts at one of the nation’s leading distributors of the vaccine, Henry Schein, Inc., offer five reasons for vaccination:

1. **Influenza kills.** In the *Journal of Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Dr. Gregory A. Poland of the Mayo Clinic estimated that, on average, as many Americans die from influenza each year (20,000) as from H.I.V., the virus that causes AIDS. The West Nile outbreak resulted in 1,641 hospitalizations and 80 deaths in the spring and summer of 2002. The flu hospitalizes an estimated 114,000 Americans each year, killing 20,000 of them.

2. **The virus is a constantly moving target, mutating every flu season.** Therefore, last year’s vaccination won’t be effective against this year’s strain.

3. **Seniors are particularly at risk.** While up to 90 percent of



**The Centers for Disease Control calls influenza the “single most vaccine-preventable illness.”**

those who die from influenza are over age 65, only 60 percent of the elderly are vaccinated. Fewer than half of African-Americans over age 65 are vaccinated each year.

4. **Influenza poses a major health risk to asthma sufferers, yet only one in ten with the condition is vaccinated.** The American Lung Association says flu vaccines are safe for people with asthma.

5. **The *Annals of Internal Medicine* says an annual flu vaccination is economically beneficial for healthy adults, reducing the average 2.8 days lost from work, as well as the costs associated with treatment.**

For more information on vaccine supply, doctors can call 1-800-772-4346 or see the Web site: [www.henryschein.com](http://www.henryschein.com). Anyone can learn more about the flu online at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).