

Influenza Vaccination Still Important For High-Risk Individuals During Vaccine Shortage

VNAA Urges Others To Practice Good Hygiene As Protection

(NAPSA)—While influenza is a serious disease killing an average of 36,000 Americans each year, some individuals are at increased risk for influenza-related complications. The Visiting Nurse Associations of America (VNAA) is urging those at most risk for serious illness from the influenza virus to be patient but persistent in seeking an influenza vaccination this season.

“This season, it is essential for people 65 and older as well as those at high risk to make the extra effort to receive an influenza vaccination. If your regular provider does not have vaccine, please contact your local health department or Visiting Nurse Agency for other options. Influenza is a serious illness for those over age 65,” says Carolyn Markey, R.N., VNAA president and chief executive officer.

Due to the decreased supply of influenza vaccine, this season the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced priority groups for vaccination for the 2004-2005 influenza season, including:

- All children aged 6 through 23 months of age
- Adults aged 65 years and older
- Persons aged 2 to 64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions
- All women who will be pregnant during influenza season
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- Children 6 months-18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy
- Health care workers with direct patient care
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged less than 6 months.

Those not included in the above priority groups are being asked to forgo vaccination this influenza season.



Although there are practical steps everyone can take to help prevent the spread of influenza, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Keep your distance from others if you are ill
- When possible, stay home when you are sick and don't send your children to school or daycare if they are sick
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Wash your hands with soap often.

For more information about influenza and current recommendations, visit the CDC at www.cdc.gov or the VNAA at www.vnaa.org.

About VNAA

The VNAA is the official national association for non-profit, community-based Visiting Nurse Agencies, who care for and treat approximately four million patients each year. The nation's network of 415+ Visiting Nurse Associations employs nearly 150,000 health care professionals, and shares a nonprofit mission to provide cost-effective and compassionate home health care to some of the nation's most vulnerable individuals, particularly the elderly and individuals with disabilities. The VNAA has a wide range of resources available on its award-winning Web site about home health care and things to ask about when considering home health care. Click www.vnaa.org to locate a VNA near you.