

Special event kicks off local flu shot season

**Carson City Emergency Preparedness
Exercise a Success
2,700 FREE flu shots given**

October 15, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

**Carson City preparedness exercise kicks off local flu shot season
*Community immunizations Saturday, October 13, 2007***

(**Carson City, NV**)— Carson City Health & Human Services Department hosted a free immunization clinic to protect area residents from seasonal flu and to practice emergency preparedness procedures for mass vaccination.

“Call the Shots” free flu shot event was held on Saturday, October 13, 2007 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Carson City Senior Center, 911 Beverly Drive. According to Dr. Vicky Fogelman, Director of Carson City Health & Human Services, “We were scheduled to begin vaccinating at 9:00 a.m. but the public was lining up around the building and down the street, so we opened the clinic 40 minutes early. The entire clinic was a huge success.”

Carson City Health and Human Services is testing its ability to quickly immunize large numbers of people within a short period of time to help us prepare for a public health emergency. “Based on our performance on Saturday, we could vaccinate over 600 people an hour. Each year that we test ourselves, we become more efficient at this process. We tested a drive-thru clinic this year, and it was a big hit,” Dr. Fogelman reported.

Carson City Health and Human Services depends on volunteers from the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and other organizations, such as the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), the American Legion, MedDirect, the Nevada Public Health Foundation, Rural Clinics Community Mental Health Centers, the Sheriff’s Reserves, and Amateur Radio Emergency Services (ARES) to help with the clinic. More than 90 citizen volunteers also helped to staff this real-life exercise. Dr. Fogelman praised the performance of the staff and volunteers. “These organizations and volunteers are our life-blood, and we couldn’t put on an event of this magnitude without them. Their dedication and commitment is truly amazing, and we can’t thank them enough.”

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The Health Department's counterparts in Washoe County also held a free community flu shot clinic on Saturday at Reed High School in Sparks, Nevada. They were able to vaccinate 2500 people in approximately three-and-a-half hours and ran out of vaccine nearly 30 minutes before the scheduled close of the clinic. Dr. Fogelman expressed her appreciation for Washoe County District Health Department's collaboration in the Northern Nevada campaign to get the word out about both clinics. "They were instrumental in promoting our event to the Northern Nevada community, and we look forward to partnering with them again next year."

Additional Seasonal Flu Information

A seasonal flu shot is recommended for most people over the age of six months to provide protection from often debilitating flu symptoms and to prevent the spread of influenza to others. The flu, more properly known as influenza, is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses.

Annual seasonal influenza vaccination is recommended for persons at high risk for developing complications from influenza (flu). These groups include:

- Healthy children 6 months up to 5 years
- Persons > 50 years of age
- Persons 2-49 years of age with certain chronic medical conditions involving the heart, lung, kidney, liver, metabolic, blood, immune system, neurological and neuromuscular disorders. A few examples of these conditions include:
 - Asthma
 - Diabetes
 - Anemia
 - Immunosuppression caused by medication, cancer treatment, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)
 - Seizures, strokes, spinal cord injuries
- Pregnant women
- Children and adolescents (5 to 18 years of age), who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy, who might be at risk for developing Reye syndrome after influenza infection
- Residents of long-term care facilities

Annual seasonal influenza vaccination is also recommended for persons who can transmit seasonal influenza to high-risk persons. These groups include:

- Healthcare workers (anyone who has hands on or face-to-face contact with patients)
- Household contacts, care givers and daycare providers of children under 5 years of age, persons > 50 years of age, pregnant women and persons of any age with a chronic health problem.

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Annual seasonal flu vaccination is the primary method for preventing the flu and its severe complications. In the United States, seasonal flu activity can begin to increase as early as November or December, but has not reached peak levels in the majority of recent flu seasons until late December through early March.

The best time to get vaccinated is October or November, but you can get vaccinated in December or later. It takes about two weeks to develop immunity after receiving a flu shot.

In September, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved use of the FluMist® nasal spray vaccine for healthy children ages 2-4 years old (24-59 months old) without a history of recurrent wheezing, as well as for healthy persons ages 5-49 years who are not pregnant.

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