

## Joint Statement on the Importance of Health Care Personnel Influenza Vaccination

Influenza is a serious illness that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes death. It is especially dangerous for those at high risk, including the very young, the elderly and those with other chronic health conditions and compromised immune systems.

It has been documented that health care workers can receive and transmit the flu virus to and from their patients and that annual vaccination of health care personnel is important to preventing the spread of the virus and thus ensuring a safe environment for patients.

Recently, health care providers across the nation have taken significant steps to prevent the spread of Ebola, a disease that doesn't even come close to the flu in terms of the potential for illness and death. The CDC estimates that 200,000 Americans are hospitalized each year with the flu and that deaths due to flu have ranged from 3,000 to 49,000 deaths annually.

Therefore, the following organizations have developed this joint statement regarding health care personnel vaccinations: the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Medical Association of the State of Alabama and the Alabama Hospital Association.

Recommendation:

- All health care personnel should receive the flu vaccination annually prior to flu season (Oct. 1 through Mar. 31). This includes:
  - Full and part-time employees
  - Staff and licensed independent practitioners
  - Individuals involved in direct patient care, as well as those not directly involved in patient care

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