



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Alabama health care organizations stress importance of having health care personnel immunized for influenza

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health, the Medical Association of the State of Alabama and the Alabama Hospital Association have issued a joint statement emphasizing the importance of health care personnel receiving influenza vaccinations, urging this simple but significant infection prevention measure to protect patients.

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 in preventing the spread of the virus and thus ensuring a safe environment for patients.

Many of these hospitalizations and deaths can be prevented by the widespread use of influenza vaccine, essentially “cocooning” patients from potential flu transmission by health care workers. 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.

All health care personnel should receive the flu vaccination annually as soon as vaccine is available. This includes full and part-time employees, staff and licensed independent practitioners, and individuals involved in direct patient care.

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