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Immediate Release

FLU SEASON STARTS EARLY – GET YOUR FLU SHOT

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INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FL –With signs that flu (influenza) is increasing earlier than usual in our community, the Florida Department of Health in Indian River County (DOH-Indian River) urges residents and visitors to take precautions to limit their risk of exposure to seasonal flu. Seasonal flu is an infection of the respiratory tract caused by the influenza virus. Compared with most other viral respiratory infections, such as the common cold, influenza infection often causes a more severe illness.

"By getting a flu shot and practicing good hand washing techniques, we can help prevent the spread of the flu", said Miranda Hawker, Florida Department of Health Administrator. "Everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated, even if they got the flu shot last season."

Be sure to watch for symptoms of the flu, such as headache, fever, a severe cough, runny nose or body aches. Contact your primary care physician if symptoms appear.

DOH-Indian River urges the following preventive steps for the flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze in your elbow.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

- If you are sick with flu–like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)

- Get re-vaccinated EVERY YEAR because strains of flu viruses change each year.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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