

HUDSON REGIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION  
NJLINC'S HEALTH ALERT NETWORK  
Public Health Information  
October 4, 2011

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To Hudson County Health Officers and Public Health Community:

## Department of Health and Senior Services

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### News Releases

RELEASE: October 04, 2011

#### **Health and Senior Services Commissioner Encourages Flu Vaccination**

New Jersey Health and Senior Services Commissioner Mary O'Dowd visited a pediatric flu clinic at the Center for Health Education Medicine and Dentistry (CHEMED) in Lakewood today to highlight the importance of getting a flu shot and practicing good hygiene habits to reduce the spread of flu, colds and respiratory illnesses. During her visit to the flu clinic, the Commissioner spoke with several children about how the flu is spread and how critical vaccination is to staying healthy.

"Vaccination is the best protection against the flu," Commissioner O'Dowd said. "The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get a flu shot. When you're vaccinated, you protect your health and your family's health."

During today's visit, children received immunizations funded through New Jersey's Vaccines for Children Program. This is a federally funded, state operated vaccine supply program that provides pediatric vaccines at no cost to doctors to serve children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of an inability to pay. For more information on this program please visit: <https://njiis.nj.gov/njiis/html/vfc.html>.

Many groups, including people age 50 years and older; people with chronic illnesses such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes; and pregnant women are at higher risk for complications from influenza. Health care workers and caregivers of high-risk individuals should also get vaccinated. Voluntary vaccination for health care workers is an essential preventive safeguard against exposure and protects patients from becoming infected through exposure to workers with influenza.

“It is especially important for the young, the elderly and health care workers to get flu shots to protect themselves, their families and the vulnerable within our communities,” said Commissioner O’Dowd. “The young and the elderly are most vulnerable to the flu and its complications.”

Along with vaccination, Commissioner O’Dowd emphasized that there are other steps to take to prevent the spread of illness:

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap thoroughly and frequently.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your sleeve or disposable tissue.
- Stay home if you are sick.

For information about seasonal flu, visit the DHSS website at [www.nj.gov/health/flu](http://www.nj.gov/health/flu).

Materials are available for the general public and for healthcare workers on preventing the spread of flu, respiratory hygiene and hand washing.

Residents interested in getting an influenza vaccination can click on the “Find a Flu Shot” button on the DHSS Flu web page.

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