**Newsletter | E-mail Template: Flu Informational Message**

An annual flu vaccination is the best way to prevent the flu and the flu-related complications that could lead to hospitalization and even death. Health experts across the country recommend that everyone 6 months and older get a flu vaccine.

Over the years, the number of people recommended for flu vaccination grew steadily as experts learned more about who as at highest risk for flu complications or who was bearing the greatest burden of illness and possibly playing a role in spreading flu in the community. Scientists and public health experts came to recognize that while influenza is particularly dangerous for certain people, it can cause severe illness and even death for anyone, regardless of whether or not they have high-risk conditions. In fact, influenza is among the most common respiratory illness in the United States, infection millions of people every flu season. However, only 46% of people 6 months of age and older were vaccinated during the 2012-13 season.

Every year, flu spreads across the country, from person to person, family to family, and community to community. The severity of flu illness can vary from mild to severe. When severe, flu complications can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Even healthy children and adults can get very sick from the flu.

“One of the greatest challenges we face from the flu is the uncertainty of the disease,” explains Dr. Anne Schuchat, Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). “Flu viruses are constantly changing. Each flu season, different flu viruses can spread, and they can affect people differently based on their body’s ability to fight infection.”

Over a period of 31 seasons between 1976 and 2007, estimated of flu-associated deaths in the United States range from a low f about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people. Each year, it’s estimated that more than 200,000 people are hospitalized because of flu-related complications. People with certain long-term health conditions (e.g., heart disease, diabetes, asthma) are at greater risk of experiencing serious health complications as a result of flu. A flu vaccine is the first and best way to prevent influenza and is particularly important in people who are at a higher risk of serious flu complications.

Getting a flu vaccine is more convenient than ever before with the vaccination clinic we are hosting for employees. When you’re out and about in the office and see signs offering flu shots, remember: the flu vaccine is the single best way to prevent the flu.