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National Influenza Vaccination Week, January 10-16, 2010

Today's message focuses on Parents and Caregivers of Children and Adolescents

The Department of Public Health and Social Services joins the nation in celebrating National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW). NIVW is a national observance that was established to highlight the importance of continuing influenza vaccination, as well as fostering greater use of flu vaccine after the holiday season. This year's NIVW is January 10-16, 2010.

In line with NIVW, DPHSS continues to encourage island residents to get vaccinated. DPHSS will be holding a H1N1 Mass Vaccination Point of Dispensing (POD) for island residents on Saturday, January 16 at the Yigo Gym between 9 am to 12 noon. The last person to be vaccinated will be accepted at 11:30 am.

Anyone who has not yet been vaccinated against the H1N1 Influenza is encouraged to attend the DPHSS POD on any of the scheduled POD dates. More POD dates and locations will be announced at a later time. Please bring a photo ID with you and all minors must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. You are also encouraged to bring your immunization records if they are available, however it is not mandatory.

Today's message focuses on **Parents and Caregivers of Children and Adolescents** and highlights the importance of vaccination for pregnant women, children, and caregivers of infants aged <6 months.

- Flu takes a big toll on children, especially children younger than 2 years. Each year in the United States, an average of 20,000 children younger than five years old are hospitalized. Since CDC began tracking pediatric flu-related deaths in 2003-2004, the number of pediatric deaths reported to CDC has ranged from 46 during the 2005-2006 season to the 229 deaths reported so far during the 2009-2010 season.
- Thus far during the 2009-10 influenza season, 229 children have died of influenza, a tragic reminder of the toll that the 2009 H1N1 virus has taken on children.
- With the spread of the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that from April through mid-November 2009, 10,000 people are estimated to have died from complications related to 2009 H1N1 - and many have been children and young people.
- Vaccination against 2009 H1N1 flu is recommended for all children, teens and young adults, ages 6 months through 24 years, and is increasingly available through state health departments, pediatrician offices and health clinics.
- Children through 9 years of age should get **two doses** of vaccine, about a month apart. Older children and adults need only one dose.

- Infants under six months old are too young to receive the flu vaccine, and they are among the most vulnerable to developing serious complications from flu, including hospitalization and sometimes even death. If you are a parent or caregiver of an infant less than six months of age, getting your flu vaccine will help protect you and the baby.
- Vaccination is key to protecting children from 2009 H1N1 flu. Make sure your children get vaccinated, and if they're too young (younger than 6 months of age) then vaccinate family members and caregivers to reduce the risk of someone given flu to your child. To protect the infant, all household contacts and out of home caregivers should get the flu vaccine, including siblings, parents, caregivers, babysitters, etc.
- Flu vaccines are safe and cannot give your child the flu. Over the years, hundreds of millions of Americans have received seasonal flu vaccines and these vaccines have an excellent safety record. So far, the vaccine against 2009 H1N1 flu has the same safety record as the seasonal flu - and it's produced just like the seasonal flu vaccines that are made every year.
- 2009 H1N1 adolescent flu-related mortality rates are already considerably higher than total deaths reported in previous flu seasons, compared to all other age groups.
- Seventy-five adolescents aged 12-17 years have died from 2009 H1N1 from August 2009 through December 2009 compared to 47 adolescents during the entire 2008-2009 flu season.
- Children with High-risk conditions:
 - If a child has an underlying health condition like asthma, a neurological disorder or diabetes, they are at high risk for flu-related complications and should be vaccinated.
 - Please see CDC's flu-related brochure for parents with children and adolescent who have high-risk medical conditions:
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/childcare/toolkit/pdf/H1N1Seasonal_HiRiskChildren_Final.pdf

Pregnant women:

- Pregnant women should receive both the shot against 2009 H1N1 flu and the seasonal flu shot. A pregnant woman who gets any type of flu has a greater chance for serious health problems. If a woman has her baby before getting the shots, she and other household contacts of the newborn baby should still get both shots.
- Compared with people in general who get 2009 H1N1, pregnant women with 2009 H1N1 flu are more likely to be admitted to hospitals. Pregnant women are also more likely to have serious illness and death from 2009 H1N1 flu.
- When a pregnant woman gets a flu shot, it can protect both her and her baby. Research has found that pregnant women who had a flu shot get sick less often with the flu than do pregnant women who did not get a flu shot. One study even showed that babies born to mothers who had a flu shot in pregnancy also are less likely to get sick with flu than do babies whose mothers did not get a flu shot.

- The seasonal flu shot has been given to millions of pregnant women over many years. Flu shots have not been shown to cause harm to pregnant women or their babies. The 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine is being made in the same way and at the same places where the seasonal flu vaccine is made.
- Breast milk is the perfect food for your baby. Babies who are breastfed get sick from infections like the flu less often and less severely than babies who are not breastfed. You can breastfeed even if you have just gotten flu vaccine.

Information about the H1N1 Influenza is also available at the following websites at www.flu.gov; Government of Guam's H1N1 website at <http://flu.guam.gov>; or Guam Homeland Security/Office of Civil Defense website at www.guamhs.org. You may also call the Immunization Program at 735-7143 or the Information Line at 735-H1N1 (4161), Monday - Friday from 8 am to 5 pm.