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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Call to arms: Southern Nevadans urged to “Fight the Flu”

Nov. 27 through Dec. 3 marks National Influenza Vaccination Week

LAS VEGAS - Nov. 27, 2006 - In an effort to encourage Southern Nevadans to get a flu shot, the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) celebrates National Influenza Vaccination Week, Nov. 27- Dec. 3 and urges residents to “Fight the Flu.” The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) designated the week following Thanksgiving as a perfect opportunity to encourage flu vaccinations after the holiday weekend, when the number of inoculations tends to drop off.

“Many people believe that the weeks after Thanksgiving are too late to get a flu shot, which is not the case. Because flu activity is relatively mild at that time, it is still beneficial for anyone to get their shot in late November and even into December,” said Dr. Donald S. Kwalick, the Southern Nevada Health District’s chief health officer. “Encouraging people to get flu shots was a major component in our Fight the Flu campaign, which ran throughout November. Flu shots remain the best way to avoid getting sick.”

In Southern Nevada, flu season typically begins in late December and peaks in February; the season can continue until May. As of late November, the CDC reports that 77 million flu vaccine doses have been distributed and the supply of vaccine is at an all-time high with manufacturers reporting that they anticipate between 110 million and 115 million doses to be distributed this year. At the health district, public health nurses are administering about 800 vaccinations daily.

The Southern Nevada Health District provides flu shots and the inhaled FluMist weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at all of its public health centers. Flu shots and FluMist are \$30.

“With ample vaccine expected this year, we encourage everyone to get their flu shot. Because of slight variations in the virus, last year’s shot will not protect against this year’s strain, so it’s advised that everyone receives an annual flu vaccination to reduce their chances of getting sick,” said Kwalick.

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Influenza Vaccine Week – add one

Although it is recommended that everyone get a flu shot, it is especially important for those who are considered to be at high risk of complications if they get the flu, including people age 50 and over, pregnant women, individuals between the ages of six months old and 49 years who have certain chronic medical conditions, health care workers and household contacts of individuals who are at high risk. Additionally, the CDC revised its recommendations regarding children and now encourages flu shots for children between the ages of six months and 59 months.

The agency's Fight the Flu campaign included radio, print ads and a direct mail piece that provided residents with information to fight the flu and how to care for themselves if they contracted it. SNHD partnered with its counterparts in Carson City and Washoe counties and Las Vegas-based Brown & Partners Advertising, Public Relations and Public Affairs.

Kwalick said that the campaign offered common sense information to the community including basic hygiene tips such as coughing into a sleeve or a tissue, hand washing and encouraging sick individuals to stay home.

For more information about flu vaccinations, call the Southern Nevada Health District's immunization project, (702) 759-0850 or visit www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org or www.flurevolution.com.