



Press Release:

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Media Contacts:

Elena Ivanova, elena.ivanova@cityofchicago.org

Katelyn Mullan, kmullan@everthriveil.org

Colleen Miller, colleen_miller@bcbsil.com

The Chicago Department of Public Health Launches its Annual Flu Vaccination Campaign

No-cost flu shots are available to residents at over 50 community flu clinics

CHICAGO – Today, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) is launching its annual Flu Vaccination Campaign to raise awareness about the flu and encourage Chicagoans to receive their flu shot. CDPH recommends everyone six months and older receive a yearly flu vaccine as the first, and most important step, in protecting against the flu. To ensure that every resident can access vaccines, regardless of their immigration status and ability to pay, CDPH has scheduled [more than 50 community flu clinics](#) over the next two months where residents can get their flu shot for no out-of-pocket cost.

“Now more than ever, everyone needs to do their part to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses such as the flu and COVID-19,” said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “What will happen this fall and winter is uncertain, but it is likely that there will be both COVID-19 and seasonal flu activity. Getting the seasonal flu vaccination before the end of October is the best way to protect yourself, your loved ones, your community and the global community from the flu.”

Every year, CDPH organizes a mass vaccination campaign to protect Chicago residents from influenza, hosting walk-in flu clinics and providing thousands of flu vaccines at no cost. This fall, we are adjusting our flu clinic operations to increase capacity, allow for appropriate social distancing and protect both our staff and clients. We will host over 40 recurring flu clinics at large locations across the City, such as Chicago’s City Colleges, and multiple smaller, one-time clinics in high-risk communities. The full schedule is available online at chicago.gov/flu. Walk-ins are welcome, but residents will soon be able to register in advance on the website.

“The flu vaccine has saved millions of lives. It is safe, effective and helps reduce the risk of severe outcomes, including hospitalization and death,” said Dr. Candice Robinson, CDPH Medical Director. “It is also readily available citywide at many doctor’s offices, pharmacies, community health centers and flu clinics.”

Additionally, CDPH offers no-cost vaccines to uninsured children and adults at CDPH walk-in immunization clinics and via a mobile immunization clinic. The Chicago Mobile CareVan is a public/private partnership with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL) that started in 1993 after



the large measles outbreak in Chicago. During 2019, this partnership allowed CDPH to hold 308 community-based immunization clinics in 162 locations, totaling 7,352 vaccination encounters with 11,237 vaccine doses administered.

“We know immunizations like the flu shot are a key component to maintaining and improving community health – especially during this pandemic,” said Harmony Harrington, vice-president of Government and Community Relations for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois. “Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois is putting a special emphasis on immunizations this fall as part of our [Wellness Can’t Wait](#) initiative and we’re grateful for the partnership with the Chicago Department of Public Health that lets our CareVan bring needed interventions directly to where they are needed most.”

CDPH will soon launch its annual public awareness campaign to promote the importance of influenza vaccination that will feature print, digital, and video ads in both English and Spanish. CDPH will also launch an influencer marketing campaign to motivate younger adults to get vaccinated. All residents are encouraged to participate in the campaign by posting and sharing photos on social media with #ChiFluFighter.

“Getting the flu shot is the best protection for you and your family as we head into the flu season. Because COVID-19 is already burdening our health care system, it’s especially important this year to prevent the spread of illness and protect those who are more susceptible to getting the flu and experiencing its worst symptoms,” said EverThrive Illinois Executive Director Chi Chi Okwu, MPH. “EverThrive IL is working with CDPH and our community partners to ensure everyone has access to this vital, life-saving vaccine.”

While the flu vaccination is always important, this season getting vaccinated is more important than ever. This is especially true for people who are at higher risk of being exposed to or developing serious complications from flu **and** COVID-19, as well as those who are caregivers of people who are at higher risk from these two diseases. This includes:

- People 65 and older, who account for the majority of hospitalizations and deaths from flu and COVID-19.
- People with underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, neurologic disorders, weakened immune systems and diabetes, who also are more likely to have serious flu and COVID-19 outcomes.
- African Americans and Hispanics, who are disproportionately affected by diseases like asthma, diabetes, obesity, and other chronic conditions that can increase the risk for serious flu and COVID-19 complications.
- Caregivers in long-term care facilities—in addition to residents—who are in daily close contact with people who are most vulnerable to serious flu and COVID-19 illness and death.
- Essential workers who have frequent interactions with the public and who are therefore more likely to be exposed to flu and COVID-19.



Residents are best served when they receive vaccines as part of a routine visit with a primary care provider. If you do not have a doctor, find a nearby pharmacy that offers the flu vaccine or call 311 to locate a CDPH Community Flu Clinic. To make it easier for residents to find a location to be vaccinated, CDPH has relaunched the [Chicago Flu Vaccine Finder](#), a web-based app that shows the closest location where the flu shot is available.

For more information about the flu and to see the full list of community flu clinics in Chicago, visit chicago.gov/flu.

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