

HEMOCARE MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

The Carolinas are ready to flight the flu

Large quantities of flu vaccine are being distributed to health departments and clinics across the Carolinas as the general public begins to prepare for the anticipated flu season. As the nation's seventh leading cause of death, influenza causes on average more than 41,000 deaths and 200,000 flu-related hospitalizations each year. Between October 2012 and June 2013, the virus claimed 59 lives in North Carolina and 46 in South Carolina.

For the third year in a row, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is advising everyone older than six months of age receive the seasonal influenza vaccination, which will provide protection against H1N1, H3N2, and an influenza B strain. The Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence (CCME) is teaming up again this year with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control's (SC DHEC) Immunization Division to promote immunizations to prevent flu and pneumonia during flu season, which runs from October 2013 through March 2014.

"Getting a flu vaccine every year is still the best way to help prevent the spread of the flu virus," said Riyadh Muhammad, MD, MPH, medical consultant with SC DHEC's Immunization Division. "Now is a great time to get the flu shot before flu activity starts to pick up since it takes about two weeks for the flu shot to work and make the antibodies needed to fight illness."

According to the American Lung Association, nearly half of all pneumonia cases are caused by viruses that affect a person's respiratory system; influenza being among the most common. The symptoms of flu and pneumonia are simi-



lar so it can be difficult to detect the difference; however, with pneumonia, chills become more severe and fever temperatures can reach 105 degrees, whereas flu temperatures typically peak at 102 degrees.

Flu symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

(Continued on page 2)

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(Continued from page 1)

In addition to pneumonia, flu virus complications can also lead to ear infections, sinus infections, and dehydration, and further harm individuals with pre-existing conditions such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. Flu viruses can spread through the air by inhaling infected droplets produced through sneezes and coughs, and by touching your eyes, nose, or mouth after touching an infected surface. Besides the flu shot, health officials say the best forms of defense are to avoid contact with infected persons; stay home if you are infected; cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze; wash your hands frequently; avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth; and practice good health by getting adequate rest, nutrition, and exercise, which builds immunity.

“The seasonal flu vaccination is a safe, effective, affordable, and accessible prevention option for the general public, but most importantly, it can help save lives,” said Melinda Postal, CCME director of communications and member of the South Carolina Coalition for Older Adult Immunizations. “CCME and SC DHEC encourage everyone to get their flu vaccination sooner rather than later.”

Flu shots typically cost less than \$30 and are covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and certain health insurance plans. DHEC is focusing its resources on providing flu shots to people who are uninsured, under-insured, and those who cannot receive a flu vaccine anywhere else. There are many flu vaccine providers in local communities across South Carolina to serve people with health insurance and those who have the ability to pay for the vaccine. DHEC asks that individuals with Medicare, Medicaid or other type of health insurance coverage for the flu vaccine visit their health care provider or local pharmacy to get a flu shot.

FOR MORE INFO

To find a clinic in South Carolina, visit www.scdhec.gov/flu/clinicoptions.htm.

To find a clinic in North Carolina, visit www.flu.nc.gov.

Happy Birthday

MAY

Earl Effler, 7; Prue Thornburg, 8; Mildred Whitman, 13; Jeannie Godfrey and Lynn Smith, 14; Mary Hodge and Dena Sherill, 17; Geneva Dooley, 21; Georgia Duncan, 26;

JUNE

Margaret Bumgarner, 2; Pauline Barnhill, 3; Karen Philyaw, 10; Linda Patterson, 11; Donna Thompson, 13; Beulah Kerley, 14; Bernice Hubbard, 15; Cynthia Burcham and Kimmie Leatherman, 26

JULY

Judith McCord, 9; Virginia Caldwell, 18; Raymond Minton, 20; Rebecca Goble, 25; Debra Johnson, 26; Pam Echerd, 28

AUGUST

Dee Dee Parlier, 4; Angela Harbin and Rose McCurdy, 7; Debbie Church, 16; Estalene Hollifield, 20; Ronald Barnes, 23; Odessa Davidson, 24; Contessa Drew, 25

SEPTEMBER

Marlene Watson, 1; Mary Brown, 6; Virginia Sisk, 9; Libby Miller, 11; Jackie Fallin, 12; Mary Caldwell, 14; Hazel Spera, 16; Marie McKay and Mildred Brown, 20; Timothy Sweitzer, 25; Ronald Johnson, 27; Loretta Brann, 28; Judy Sanders, 29

OCTOBER

Mary Dibernardo, 4; Donald Jackson, 8; Sylvia McKinney, 10; Barbara Reel and Edith Robinson, 12; Patricia Cannon, 13; Savonda Bumgarner, 15; Sharon Diego, 27; Etta McKinney, 31

NOVEMBER

Lori Newton, 2; Anita Gibson, 4; Betsy Morrison, 7; Mariana Blair, 11; Rose Johnson, 12; Vivian Baker, 14; Pat Nixon, 17; Larisha Ferguson, 18; Suma Matheson, 22; Ethylene Roberts, 24; Barbara Antonelli, 30

DECEMBER

Betty Moretz, 19; Christine Dye, 22; Judy Southers, 26; Betty Thomas, 29