



# MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 20, 2009

## **Maryland Area Sees Rise In Confirmed Cases of Influenza It is not too late to protect yourself with the Flu vaccine!**

**Columbia, MD** – Maryland Community Health Administration Influenza Surveillance Program reported that during the most current reporting week (February 7-14) the Flu has reached “widespread” proportions in our area. In essence, the numbers of doctor visits made due to influenza-like symptoms has seen marked increases over previous weeks. Nine hospitalizations were reported as a result of the flu during this week; they included five children and four adults.

It is not too late. Everyone should get a flu vaccine. Those who would particularly benefit from it are:

- Anyone 50 years of age or older
- Anyone with a weakened immune system
- Anyone 6 months to 18 years of age who takes chronic aspirin therapy
- Anyone with a serious long-term health problem such as heart disease, lung disease, or kidney disease
- Anyone living in a nursing home, assisted living facility, or rehabilitation facility
- Pregnant women in the 2nd and 3rd trimester
- Anyone coming in close contact with people at risk of complications (for example, health care workers or family members)

It is important for parents to know the CDC expanded its flu vaccination recommendations this year to include all children from 6 months through 18 years old.

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## **Maryland Area Sees Rise In Confirmed Cases of Influenza It is not too late to protect yourself with the Flu vaccine!**

Dr. Peter Beilenson, Howard County Health Officer says that “with the flu season expanding beyond March and the number of cases of the flu peaking, now is a great time, if you have not yet done so, with vaccine readily available, to get your flu shot”. To get your influenza vaccine, please call the Howard County Health Department’s Columbia Health Center at 410-313-7500 or the Southeastern Health Center at 410-880-5888 to schedule your NO COST vaccine!

(If you are outside of the Howard County area, contact your local Health Department for information about where you might get your flu shot.)

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