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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS ENCOURAGE RESIDENTS TO TAKE ACTION NOW TO PROTECT THEMSELVES AND OTHERS AGAINST SEASONAL INFLUENZA *Public Health Services Provides Community Seasonal Flu Vaccine Clinics*

STOCKTON, CA (October 2, 2012) - San Joaquin County Health Officer, Dr. Karen Furst, is advising the community that it is time to take action to protect against this year's seasonal influenza. Influenza is a serious contagious disease that can be prevented. Dr. Furst recommends, "The single best way to prevent influenza is to get vaccinated. Practicing good health habits will further help protect against the flu."

This year, in addition to offering seasonal influenza vaccine for people of all ages during regular immunization hours at the Lodi, Manteca and Stockton clinics, San Joaquin County Public Health Services has scheduled a number of special influenza vaccine clinics for adults (ages 18 and older) at community sites. These special clinics are intended to provide seasonal influenza vaccine to adults who do not have health insurance and those at highest risk of complications from the flu. The clinics are walk-in clinics and no appointment is required. The fee for influenza vaccination through any of the Public Health Clinics is \$15, but no one will be turned away because of inability to pay. San Joaquin County Public Health Services regular immunization clinic schedules can be found at www.sjcphs.org or by calling 1-800-839-4949. (See attached schedule for times and locations.)

Seasonal influenza vaccine is available for adults and children through various sources in the community, including doctor's offices, neighborhood pharmacies, grocery stores, Public Health Clinics, and at some work sites. Medicare and most insurance plans cover the cost of flu vaccine, so health officials encourage anyone who wishes to decrease their risk of influenza to contact their medical provider to see if they have the flu vaccine. To find immunization clinic sites that are convenient for you, log onto www.flu.gov.

San Joaquin County Public Health officials urge everyone to take the following actions to protect yourself and others from influenza:

1. Take time to get a flu vaccine.

- While there are many different influenza viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the three strains of influenza that research suggests will be most common. The influenza vaccine is safe, effective, and available now.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine as soon as the current season's

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vaccines are available because it takes 2 to 4 weeks to build up immunity. Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness. People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.

- Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for people at high risk for influenza-related complications.
- Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. All household contacts or anyone caring for newborns should be vaccinated instead.

2. Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.

- Cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand-sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Keep your body healthy by eating a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, exercise for at least 30 minutes each day, get 8-10 hours of sleep each night, and don't smoke or drink alcohol.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

For more information about seasonal influenza and the benefits of vaccination, visit the California Department of Public Health Immunization Branch website at [www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza\(Flu\).aspx](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza(Flu).aspx), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/flu.

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Attachment:

*2012 Schedule for Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Clinics provided by San Joaquin County Public Health Services at Special Community Sites and Public Health Center Sites.
1-800-839-4949*