

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHARMACISTS MAKE FLU SHOTS MORE ACCESSIBLE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

JEFFERSON CITY, MO – Pharmacists are working overtime this holiday season to give patients access to flu shots. Many pharmacies will remain open at least part of Thanksgiving Day and through the weekend, and they will continue to administer flu shots to patients who request them.

“We expect to see a peak of seasonal flu cases in the coming weeks but the seasonal flu season will not start to subside until February or March of next year. Patients are encouraged to get a seasonal flu shot at their earliest convenience” said Paul Perniciaro, RPh, President of the Missouri Pharmacy Association Board of Directors. “As travel picks up around the country more people will be exposed to the flu, making immunization an important step towards staying healthy this holiday season” he noted.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 200,000 people are hospitalized each year as a result of the flu. That number is expected to be higher this year with the combination of the H1N1 virus and the seasonal flu. In fact, the CDC reported that the influenza activity for last week was widespread in 43 states, including Missouri.

“Patients will discover that getting a flu shot at their pharmacy is a quick and easy experience. And because of their extended holiday hours, those who haven’t had a chance to make an appointment anywhere else will find this to be their best option” said Ron Fitzwater, CEO of the Missouri Pharmacy Association.

By law, pharmacists have had the power to administer flu vaccines since 2008 without a doctor’s order. According to the Missouri Board of Pharmacy, pharmacists must meet certain qualifications before they can administer vaccinations:

- Have a current Missouri pharmacist license that is not under discipline with the Board
- Hold a current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certificate issued by the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross
- Successfully complete a certificate program in administering vaccines that is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE)
- Complete two (2) hours of continuing education (CE) in administering vaccines per calendar year

Established in 1879, the Missouri Pharmacy Association is the professional society representing Missouri pharmacists, united to improve public health and patient care, enhance professional development and advocate for the interest of the profession. **For more information and a map of pharmacies administering vaccinations, visit www.MORx.com**