



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

Health Department

Administration

Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 North Broadway, 3rd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202-3653 phone (414) 286-3521 fax (414) 286-5990
web site: www.milwaukee.gov/health

For Immediate Release
September 21, 2009

Media Contact: Kawanza Newson
414-286-3548 Office
414-732-7250 Mobile

Let's Team Up Against the Flu!

Local officials urge all residents to protect themselves and their loved ones by getting a flu shot

Mayor Tom Barrett and Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker launched the annual city-wide influenza awareness campaign entitled "Let's Team Up Against the Flu!" by offering free seasonal flu shots to the public and unveiling a unique partnership to promote vaccination and good hygiene practices. The campaign, which will appear on county transit buses and large billboards throughout the city, features Brewers starting pitcher Yovani Gallardo, right fielder Corey Hart and second baseman Rickie Weeks. There will also be a school poster campaign starring Bucks guard Charlie Bell.

"This year's campaign is especially exciting because it comes at a time when the world has heightened awareness of the need for influenza vaccination to ensure the prevention of illness and disease in their community," said Commissioner of Health, Bevan K. Baker. "As I emphasize every year, vaccination against influenza is the best way to keep yourself and your loved ones safe from this serious illness."

"We look forward to enhancing our ability to protect Milwaukee citizens from influenza and other vaccine-preventable illnesses through partnership with the Brewers and Bucks," said Mayor Tom Barrett. "We know that healthy communities make for a healthy, viable city, and I am committed to working diligently to protect the health of the public in Milwaukee."

Each year, seasonal influenza causes more than 200,000 hospitalizations and about 36,000 deaths in the United States, mostly in people older than 65. Children under 5 years of age account for 20,000 flu-related hospitalizations and frequently require emergency room or urgent care center because of the flu and related complications. Vaccinating children is also very important because unvaccinated children are a particularly important source of disease spread.

In short, getting a flu shot is the most effective way to prevent infection and to prevent spread of the illness. This year, there is need for protection against both seasonal influenza and the new H1N1 or "swine" flu.

Although a vaccine against the new, novel H1N1 flu is not yet available, the Health Department is also strongly recommending that everyone get the new, novel H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available this fall. Because the people who are most at risk of getting novel H1N1 influenza and its complications are somewhat different than for regular, seasonal influenza, the MHD is *especially* recommending the novel

H1N1 vaccine for children under age 18, for young adults aged 18-24, for pregnant women, and for adults aged 25-64 who have underlying medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, other heart or lung problems, immune system problems, and other chronic medical conditions.

It is also very important for all health care workers to get both the seasonal influenza vaccine and the novel H1N1 vaccine, in order to prevent the spread of influenza in health care settings.

People should get the novel H1N1 vaccine when it is available - - *in addition* to the regular seasonal influenza vaccine - - because the regular seasonal flu vaccine is not expected to protect against the novel 2009 H1N1 flu.

The CDC estimates that more than 130 million doses of seasonal vaccine will be available during the 2009-2010 influenza season.

In addition, the agency estimates that 45 million doses of the novel H1N1 vaccine will be available by mid-October, and that 20 million more doses would be available each week thereafter up to an expected eventual total of 195 million doses.

Although flu vaccine is the most effective way to prevent flu, there are other proactive measures you can follow to reduce your chance of getting or spreading influenza this season:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based waterless hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your upper sleeve. If you use a tissue, throw it away after one use.
- Use your own drinking cups and straws.
- Avoid being exposed to people who are sick with flu-like symptoms.
- Avoid exposing others by staying home when you are sick.
- Eat nutritious meals, get plenty of rest and do not smoke.

“The Milwaukee Bucks and Charlie Bell are pleased to join the City of Milwaukee Health Department in their H1N1 citywide campaign to remind students, parents and young people of all ages that they can be proactive in helping prevent the spread of flu in our city,” said John Steinmiller, Bucks Vice President of Business Operations. “We know that students cannot learn if they are not in school, and that a healthy student is positioned to succeed in and out of the classroom. The Bucks and Charlie Bell are behind the Health Department in its important campaign to keep Milwaukee as flu-free as possible.”

“The Brewers are proud to be a part of this very important awareness campaign as we focus on controlling the spread of the H1N1 virus throughout our community,” said Rick Schlesinger, Brewers Executive Vice President of Business Operations. “We encourage everyone to take these few basic precautions and take advantage of the opportunity to receive a seasonal flu shot. With a little teamwork, we can make a difference and strike out the flu this year.”

For more information, call the flu hotline at 211 or visit our website at www.milwaukee.gov/flu.