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DON'T LET THE FLU GET YOU!

**CITY URGES ALL RESIDENTS TO GET ANNUAL FLU SHOT TO AVOID ILLNESS AND
REDUCE SPREAD OF DISEASE THIS SEASON**

Milwaukee, WI (September, 2007) – Mayor Tom Barrett, Common Council President Willie Hines and Commissioner of Health Bevan Baker launched the city's annual influenza campaign today in partnership with the Aurora Visiting Nurse Association of Wisconsin, who provided an on-site influenza clinic. The event was held at the Betty Brinn Children's Museum located at 929 E. Wisconsin Avenue from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Each year, up to 20% of Americans suffer from influenza, a very common but highly infectious respiratory illness. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that influenza and its complications are responsible for over 36,000 fatalities across the U.S. each year, and more than 200,000 hospitalizations. Seniors age 65 and over account for over 90% of flu-related deaths and over half of the hospitalizations. In addition, only 50% of African Americans get an annual flu shot as compared to 72% of their White counterparts.

"It must be stressed that the single-most effective action anyone can take to reduce his or her chances of getting the flu this season is to get vaccinated," said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker.

The CDC estimates there will be no influenza vaccine shortages or delays this year in the United States. An expected 132 million doses of flu vaccine will be made available. According to the CDC, this represents an increase of approximately 10 million doses over last season and includes approximately 7 million doses of FluMist®, an intranasal flu vaccine that the Food and Drug Administration has approved for healthy individuals 2 – 49 years of age.

Perhaps the most significant change in the CDC's recommendations for this season is that children between 6 months and 8 years need 2 doses of vaccine if they have not been previously vaccinated against influenza at anytime in the past; immunization providers should provide influenza vaccine and clinics throughout the flu season (typically October-March) and, only 40% of health care workers actually get a flu shot, so healthcare administrators should encourage all healthcare workers to get vaccinated to further ensure patient safety.

The following groups have been identified by the CDC as high-risk for complications of the flu, and should protect themselves by getting the influenza vaccine:

- Children aged 6-59 months of age
- All persons aged 50 years of age or older
- People who live in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities
- Persons of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- Women who will become pregnant at anytime during flu season
- Health-care personnel who provide direct patient care
- Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age
- Household contacts of persons of high-risk for complications of flu (above)

Some proactive measures you can follow to avoid the flu 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.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Eat nutritious meals, get plenty of rest and do not smoke.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces such as door knobs, refrigerator handles, telephones, or water faucets.

For more information on the flu call 414-286-8034 or visit our website at www.milwaukee.gov/health