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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Thursday, December 02, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pinellas County Health Department Receives Additional Flu Vaccine

The Pinellas County Health Department has received a shipment of 36,640 doses of adult influenza vaccine. In accordance with Florida Department of Health directives that instruct county health departments to coordinate distribution of vaccines within the private sector, the Pinellas County Health Department has already allocated 90% of this shipment for immediate distribution to private physicians and walk-in clinics, nursing homes, assisted living facilities and hospitals in Pinellas County that had requests on file that could not be filled from previous shipments of vaccine.

The Pinellas County Health Department has no public flu shot clinics planned at this time, but flu vaccine is being made available to walk-in clinics throughout the county.

The health department is still receiving requests from area health providers serving high risk groups, and anticipates distributing the remaining 10% of the shipment to the medical community within the next week. Additional flu vaccine is expected in January, and providers are encouraged to contact the health department if they need flu vaccine for their at-risk patients.

“We expect to hear from additional private providers who still have unmet needs,” said John P. Heilman, M.D., M.P.H., director of the Pinellas County Health Department. “We are working with physicians who are requesting doses for their patients and for individuals in the at-risk categories.”

Heilman further said that high-risk individuals should also be vaccinated for pneumonia – an infection often contracted after the body is weakened from the flu. While this vaccine does not provide protection against the influenza virus, it does offer protection against a common complication from the flu. To obtain a pneumonia vaccine, individuals should contact their primary healthcare provider. In addition, pneumonia vaccinations are available through the Pinellas County Health Department.

In most years, local health departments – including the Pinellas County Health Department – provide only a small portion of flu shots administered in their communities. Most flu shots are provided through doctor’s offices, hospitals and other private health care providers. Additional flu shots are administered in nursing homes, assisted living facilities (ALF’s) and hospitals. Health officials emphasize that flu vaccine is now being distributed to these private providers, and encourage those at risk to be in contact with their regular provider to see if vaccine is available.

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