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NEW INITIATIVE TO KEEP FLU OUT OF SCHOOL

National Association of School Nurses, Families Fighting Flu, and National Foundation for Infectious Diseases to collaborate on fighting flu

Silver Spring, MD (September 13, 2013) – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has awarded a \$500,000 cooperative agreement over a five-year period (\$100,000 for year one, with plans to continue for a total of five years, pending availability of funds) to the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), Families Fighting Flu (FFF), and the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases – *Childhood Influenza Immunization Coalition* (NFID) to *Keep Flu Out of School*. NASN, FFF, and NFID will collaborate to promote, strengthen, and enhance influenza prevention efforts among elementary school students, their parents, and teachers.

Keep Flu Out of School is a school-based program designed to raise awareness about the burden of influenza (flu) and the benefits of annual vaccination. The long-term outcomes of the project are to: ensure that elementary school children receive an annual influenza vaccination; reduce childhood immunization barriers; and, ultimately increase influenza vaccination coverage rates among children in elementary school – grades K-5.

According to the CDC, the single best way to protect your children from the flu is to get them vaccinated each year. The flu is a serious disease; much more dangerous than the common cold for children. Each year, many children get sick with influenza; some of those illnesses result in death. The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated against the flu every year.

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“NASN remains focused on the health and academic success of all students,” said NASN President Carolyn Duff.” By encouraging all students to get the annual flu vaccination, we increase the days that our students are in the classroom, healthy, and learning.”

In the first year of the grant, a pilot school district will involve elementary school nurses working with students in grades K-5, their teachers, and their parents/guardians. During years two through five, additional school districts will be added that meet the program criteria (located in states with reported influenza vaccine uptake of less than 50 percent, low socioeconomic status, and presence of a school nurse).

“We are excited to have the opportunity to work in partnership with the NASN and NFID to help increase the number of school-age children vaccinated against the flu every year,” said FFF President, Richard Kanowitz whose young daughter died from influenza in 2004. “Flu is serious, but it’s also preventable. Getting students vaccinated against the flu needs to be a top priority for all families this season.”

As part of the cooperative agreement, school nurses across the country will have access to program materials, program outcomes, and will be invited to become program participants.

NFID supports annual vaccination as the best way to protect children and others from influenza. According to Dr. Carol J. Baker, CIIC Chair, “Not only are unvaccinated children at risk for influenza, but infected children can transmit influenza to other vulnerable people around them, including infants, caregivers, and grandparents.”

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www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/children.htm

NASN

The National Association of School Nurses is a non-profit specialty nursing organization, organized in 1968 and incorporated in 1977, representing school nurses exclusively. NASN has more than 15,000 individual members and 50 affiliate school nurse organizations. NASN advances the specialty practice of school nursing to improve the health and academic success of all students. To learn more about NASN, visit www.nasn.org or call 866-627-6767.

Families Fighting Flu

Families Fighting Flu is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) volunteer-based advocacy organization dedicated to protecting the lives of children. Our members include families whose children have suffered serious medical complications or died from influenza, as well as health care practitioners and advocates committed to flu prevention. In honor of our children, we work to increase awareness about the seriousness of the disease and to reduce the number of childhood hospitalizations and deaths caused by the flu each year by increasing vaccination rates. Families Fighting Flu offers support to other families and communities who have been severely affected by the flu through resources available on www.familiesfightingflu.org.

National Foundation for Infectious Diseases – *Childhood Influenza Immunization Coalition*

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1973 dedicated to educating the public and healthcare professionals about the causes, treatment, and prevention of infectious diseases. NFID leads the Childhood Influenza Immunization Coalition (CIIC), a coalition of more than 30 of the nation's leading public health, medical, patient, and parent groups to help protect children from influenza. CIIC was established to protect infants, children, and adolescents from influenza by communicating with "one strong voice" the need to make influenza immunization a national health priority. To learn more about NFID and CIIC, visit www.preventchildhoodinfluenza.org.

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