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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Flu shots to be available in Pinellas County;
Shots first given to those in CDC priority groups**

PINELLAS COUNTY – Flu season officially starts in October and continues through May. The Pinellas County Health Department, in accordance with this year's U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, will give flu shots first to people in the following priority groups, starting **Monday, October 3rd** and running through the end of October:

- Persons aged 65 years and older
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- Persons with chronic medical conditions
- Children aged six to 23 months
- Pregnant women
- Health care personnel who provide direct patient care
- Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children less than six months of age

Flu shots will be available to the remainder of the general public beginning November 1, 2005 based on the availability of the vaccine. We encourage those individuals interested in obtaining the flu shot to receive it in the time periods mentioned so as to ensure protection against the flu throughout the entire flu season.

There are five Pinellas County Health Department locations: St. Petersburg, Clearwater, Pinellas Park, Largo and Tarpon Springs. Flu shots will be offered on a walk-in basis from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 pm weekdays. On Wednesdays, the schedule is 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The fee for the flu shot is \$25.00 and the pneumococcal (pneumonia) shot is \$34.00. The Pinellas County Health Department will bill Medicare for the cost of the immunization for those who have Medicare Part B non-HMO.

In addition to vaccination, the risk of contracting respiratory infections can be reduced by following a few simple steps:

- Clean hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleanser.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick and keep sick children home.
- Avoid close contact with people who are ill, if possible.
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

For more information, contact the Pinellas County Health Department at 727-824-6900.

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