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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pinellas County Health Department to Begin Offering Flu Shots October 15

Flu season has begun, and it can continue through February or later. Influenza (the flu) is a contagious and potentially serious illness that can lead to hospitalization and even death. Flu vaccines (flu shots) are safe, effective and cannot cause the flu. **The Pinellas County Health Department will begin offering flu shots on Monday, October 15.**

Health officials recommend flu shots for everyone – especially for individuals in the following groups:

- Individuals age 50 and older
- Residents of and staff of long-term care facilities
- People with chronic medical conditions and their household contacts
- Children aged six months to five years of age, their household contacts and out-of-home caregivers
- Pregnant women or women who will be pregnant during flu season
- Healthcare personnel
- Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children less than six months of age

You can get a flu shot at your own doctor's office, area walk-in clinics, at flu shot events hosted by local supermarkets and other public places or, starting on **Monday, October 15, at the Pinellas County Health Department**. There are five Pinellas County Health Department health centers:

1. St. Petersburg – 205 Dr. ML King Street North
2. Clearwater – 310 N. Myrtle Avenue
3. Pinellas Park – 6350 76th Avenue North
4. Largo – 12420 130th Avenue North
5. Tarpon Springs – 301 South Disston Avenue

The cost of a flu shot at the health department is \$25. Pneumonia vaccines will also be available for \$40. Bring your Medicare card and a photo ID. As supplies are available, the health department will offer flu shots on a walk-in basis from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday **starting Monday, October 15, 2007**. Call the health center nearest you to check supply on the day you plan to go in for a flu shot. You can also call our **flu shot hotline** at (727) 824-6900, then press **2**, for current information. Information will also be available on our website at www.PinellasHealth.com.

In addition to vaccination, you can also reduce your risk of contracting respiratory infections by following a few simple steps:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand cleanser. Teach your children to do the same.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick and keep sick children home.
- Avoid crowds – where people are likely to be coughing and sneezing.
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items with others.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then put used tissues in a waste container and wash your hands.
- If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve – not into your hand.

For more information, visit www.PinellasHealth.com or www.cdc.gov/flu.

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