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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Don't Skip Your Flu Shot During a Pandemic!
There is No Vaccine for COVID-19 Yet, but There is for the Flu

Harris County – Flu season is here. It's arriving during a pandemic which has already killed more than 200,000 people in the U.S. this year. The Flu and COVID-19 are both very contagious viruses and spread in similar ways. Getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever during 2020-2021 to protect yourself and the people around you from flu, and to help reduce the pressure on healthcare systems responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. "The Flu can have very serious complications and even cause death. Unlike COVID-19, we are fortunate we have a vaccine to help prevent flu." said Dr. Umair A. Shah, HCPH Executive Director.

It's especially important for people in high risk groups to get their Flu vaccine:

- Anyone with certain medical conditions including asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and chronic lung disease.
- Pregnant women
- Young children over the age of six months
- Anyone 65 years of age and older.
- Anyone who lives with or cares for others who are at high risk of developing serious complications.

October is the ideal month to get your Flu vaccine. The vaccine will not protect you from COVID-19, but may keep you from getting the Flu. In addition to the vaccine, continue taking your COVID-19 prevention measures because they can also help prevent colds and Flu: Wash your hands frequently, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your arm, disinfect surfaces you touch and in public, wear masks and stay 6 feet from others.

While 40% of people infected with COVID-19 have no symptoms, for those who do, Flu and COVID-19 share some of the same symptoms. Flu symptoms include:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough

HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

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- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

COVID-19 has one common symptom that differs from the flu; you may lose your sense of taste or smell. If you are sick, since some symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, you may need to be tested for flu or COVID-19 to know if you have either virus. Stay in touch with your clinic or health care provider and let them know if your symptoms get worse.

FREE flu vaccines are being offered to people in Harris County who don't have insurance. ***No walk-ins are accepted, you must make an appointment by calling 832-927-7350.*** Appointments are required to allow enough space for social distancing to keep people safe. Vaccines are provided at HCPH clinics and many community locations. A current list of locations and dates is attached, but new locations will be added. For updated locations as they are added, visit <https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Resources/Flu-Season/Upcoming-Events>

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