



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 27, 2006

**CONTACT:**

Dena' Brummer

404-656-7645

## **Georgia Medicaid covers flu and pneumonia shots** *Protect yourself now against flu season in Georgia*

**ATLANTA** - Today, the Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) is urging Georgians to observe National Influenza Vaccination Week, which runs from November 27 to December 3, by getting a flu shot.

"The flu is more than sniffles," said Dr. Rhonda Medows, Commissioner of DCH. "It is a fever. It's chills. It's aching. It's coughing. And it can lead to pneumonia. All of this can be avoided with an annual flu shot."

Every year, approximately five to 20 percent of Georgia's population gets the flu every year. During an average flu season, 36,000 Americans die and more than 200,000 are hospitalized due to complications from influenza.

### **How can I get a flu or pneumonia shot?**

Flu vaccines are given at most public health departments and doctors' offices as well as some pharmacies, workplaces and other community settings.

Medicare, Medicaid and most other health plans cover pneumonia and flu shots, which you can get through your local health care provider.

"Medicaid is about more than just paying bills after people get sick," Dr. Medows said. "The Georgia Department of Community Health wants to help keep Georgia's Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries healthy and improve the quality of their lives."

Georgia Medicaid covers for influenza and pneumonia shots for eligible members who are:

- Children birth to 21 years of age
- Pregnant women
- Adults over 50 years of age
- Residents of skilled nursing facilities
- Adults in the high-risk category or with chronic medical conditions, regardless of age, which include but may not be limited to, AIDS, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and adult onset diabetes.

The services are also currently covered under Part B for eligible Medicare members.

### **Resources**

- Flu Clinic Locator - <http://www.flucliniclocator.org/>

- Planned Activities for National Influenza Vaccination Week - <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/nivw06activities.htm>

###

**About the Department of Community Health**

The Georgia Department of Community Health champions:

ACCESS to affordable, quality health care in our communities

RESPONSIBLE health planning and use of health care resources

HEALTHY behaviors and improved health outcomes

Equal Opportunity Employer