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Everyone Needs a Flu Shot!

City Launches Ads Promoting Adult Vaccines

San Francisco, CA—Flu season is here again. This year for the first time, health officials are recommending that everyone over 6 months old get a flu shot. To get the message out, the San Francisco Department of Public Health has launched a citywide ad campaign promoting flu shots and underscoring the importance of vaccines in general. The IMMUNITY campaign features powerful images of clenched fists with slogans like “Flu Shots Now!” and “Vaccines Work!”

More than 50,000 people die in the U.S each year from diseases that could have been prevented with a simple vaccine. Influenza is by far the biggest killer, but there are also regular outbreaks of measles, meningitis, and pertussis. Pertussis (or whooping cough) is currently epidemic in California. Nine infants have died of the disease this year. Most infants are infected by adults who have not been vaccinated.

“When people think about immunization, they generally think about young children,” said Dr. Mitch Katz, Director of San Francisco’s Department of Public Health. “But it’s just as important for adults to be current on their vaccinations. Unvaccinated people can spread disease to other adults and to children too young to be immunized.”

This year’s flu shot protects against the seasonal flu as well as the H1N1 swine flu virus that caused such concern last year. Supplies of the vaccine are plentiful and more retail locations than ever are offering flu shots to the public.

The campaign ads promoting flu shots and other vaccines are featured in newspapers, Muni and BART stations, and displayed on billboards, posters and buses throughout San Francisco – in English, Spanish and Chinese.

“Getting vaccinated is an easy way to protect yourself and your loved ones from getting sick.” declared Dr. Susan Fernyak, the Health Department’s director of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention. “Last year, less than half of San Franciscans got a flu shot. We can do better than that.”

The Department of Public Health has set up a website www.VaccinesForAdults.org that provides information about vaccines that adults should have as well as directions to local clinics and pharmacies that provide flu shots and other vaccines. For more information, call 311.

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