

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For More Information Contact**

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## **SEASONAL FLU VACCINE AVAILABLE AT LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS**

(Christiansburg, Va.) –Seasonal flu vaccine is available and being offered by appointment only in each health department within the New River Health District. The fee for the vaccine is \$30 per dose and is covered by Medicare and Medicaid.

“Vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza and its potentially severe complications,” said Margaret O’Dell, M.D., director of the New River Health District. “The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Virginia Department of Health recommend that all persons age six months and older be vaccinated annually. The vaccine takes full effect within two weeks and its benefits last for up to a year.”

Influenza, commonly called “the flu,” is a serious disease caused by the influenza virus that affects the respiratory tract. It is highly contagious and generally spreads from person-to-person when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus can be transmitted even before flu-like symptoms appear. A person usually becomes sick one to three days following exposure to the virus. Typical flu symptoms include fever, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches, and extreme fatigue.

Each year in the U.S. approximately 200,000 people are hospitalized due to flu illness, and flu-related deaths range from 3,000 to 49,000 each year, averaging 24,000 per year over the last three decades.

To minimize your risk of contracting or transmitting the flu, follow these simple steps:

- Get vaccinated;
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly (20 seconds minimum);
- Cover your cough, either by using a disposable tissue or coughing into your sleeve, not your hand; and
- Stay at home when you are sick.

With the 2011-2012 flu season now under way, be sure to call your local health department today to schedule an appointment:

Floyd County Health Department	540-745-2141
Giles County Health Department	540-921-2891
Montgomery County Health Department	540-381-7100
Pulaski County Health Department	540-994-5030
Radford City Health Department	540-831-5774

For more information, visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov) or call the New River Health District at 540-381-7100.

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