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Media Contact: Laura Scott, 703-533-7313

Families Fighting Flu Commends the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' Recommendation for Universal Influenza Vaccination

Vote Represents an Important Milestone to Protect All Family Members against Influenza Every Year

Arlington, VA, February 24, 2010 – Families Fighting Flu (FFF) fully supports today's vote by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to expand the current influenza vaccination recommendations to include all adults aged 19 to 49 years. Previous recommendations included all other age groups with the exception of this new adult population. This new recommendation will be implemented beginning with the 2010-2011 influenza season.

“The ACIP's vote for universal influenza vaccination recommendation is a huge step in further helping to prevent and control influenza,” said Richard Kanowitz, president of FFF. “This recommendation will help lower the chances of the disease spreading and as a result further safeguard our children from this very serious disease.” Kanowitz's four-year-old daughter, Amanda, died suddenly in March 2004 from influenza. At the time of her death, Amanda did not fall within the influenza vaccination recommendations and therefore was not vaccinated against the flu.

Influenza is a very serious disease that kills on average, nearly 100 children younger than five years of age in the U.S. every year. More than 20,000 children under the age of five are hospitalized annually due to the flu. Since August 30, 2009, the CDC has received reports of 262 influenza-associated pediatric deaths due to both H1N1 and seasonal flu during the current flu season. Annual vaccination is safe and effective and is the single best way to help prevent the number of illnesses and deaths caused by influenza in people of all age groups.

“Prevention from the flu is only as good as the number of people who actually get vaccinated,” said Laura Scott, Executive Director of FFF. “We hope now with this recommendation in place starting next flu season that all family members will get vaccinated against the flu every year to help reduce the serious risks associated with the virus, especially among children.”

About Families Fighting Flu

Families Fighting Flu is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization established in 2004 that is made up of families and healthcare practitioners. Each family has experienced first-hand the death of a child due to the flu or has had a child experience severe medical complications from the flu. We are dedicated to educating people about the severity of influenza and the importance of vaccinating children against the flu every year. Through education and advocacy, we hope to improve the rates of childhood flu vaccinations and help reduce the number of childhood illnesses and deaths caused by the flu each year. For more information, visit www.familiesfightingflu.org or call 1-888-2ENDFLU.

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