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**Families Fighting Flu Urges Seasonal Flu Vaccination in Kids**

*New Influenza Vaccination Awareness PSA Educates Families about Ways to Not Get "Sidelined" From Seasonal Flu this Year*

**Arlington, VA, September 10, 2009** – Families Fighting Flu (FFF) reminds parents today to get their children vaccinated against the seasonal flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that children six months through 18 years of age get a seasonal flu vaccination each year. This is the first year that this full influenza vaccination recommendation for children will be implemented by all doctors.

“Every year we remind families about the importance of getting children vaccinated against the flu,” said Richard Kanowitz, president of FFF. “This year, it is just as important as any other to get your kids vaccinated. The seasonal flu is very serious as it took the life of my healthy daughter who was only four years old when she died. I do not want what happened to my family to happen to any other family; therefore, I encourage everyone to call their doctor now and make an appointment to get your kids vaccinated.”

Today, FFF is also announcing the availability of a new public service announcement (PSA) that features soccer legend and mom, Mia Hamm who talks about the importance of getting a seasonal flu vaccination this year and every year. The goal of the PSA is to encourage families to get their kids, and themselves, vaccinated against the seasonal flu, which is the single best way to stay healthy. The PSA was developed in partnership with FFF, the American Youth Soccer Organization and MedImmune.

“I am excited about this new PSA as it is another great tool to help educate families about the importance of seasonal influenza vaccination,” said Joe Lastinger, board member of FFF who lost his healthy three-year-old daughter to influenza in 2004. “As a dad who has kids that play sports, it is very important to my wife and me that we help keep our children healthy by getting them vaccinated every year so that they don’t get sidelined by the flu. We’ve seen firsthand the devastation that can result from not getting children vaccinated. It’s our responsibility as parents to protect our children, so please get them a seasonal flu vaccination this year and every year.”

To view the new PSA, visit <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Qe-ytQbk2c>.

### **About Seasonal Flu in Kids**

Influenza is a very serious disease. On average, nearly 100 children younger than five years of age die each year due to influenza and its complications. In fact, more children die from flu than from chicken pox, whooping cough and measles combined.

Additionally, more than 20,000 children under the age of five are hospitalized annually due to the flu.

According to the CDC, children are two-to-three times more likely than adults to get sick with the flu because of their less-developed immune systems. School-aged children also tend to have higher rates of influenza infection because of their close contact with friends and classmates who frequently spread germs among one another. In fact, during bad flu seasons, nearly 30 percent of school-aged children get sick and miss about 38 million school days a year overall.

### **About Families Fighting Flu, Inc.**

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](http://www.familiesfightingflu.org) or call 1-888-2ENDFLU.

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