



CITY OF CLEVELAND
Mayor Frank G. Jackson

CUYAHOGA COUNTY
BOARD OF HEALTH
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Cleveland Department of Public Health



SISTERS of CHARITY
HEALTH SYSTEM

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine



NEWS RELEASE

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CLEVELAND CLINIC, METROHEALTH, SISTERS OF CHARITY, UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS JOIN WITH CITY OF CLEVELAND, CUYAHOGA COUNTY TO FOCUS ON INFLUENZA

Focus On Flu Campaign to Encourage Vaccination

Wednesday, Oct. 29, 2014, Cleveland: At a time when Americans are fixated on the speculative threat of Ebola, Cleveland's healthcare community wants to remind people to protect themselves against a tangible threat that kills 3,000 to 49,000 Americans annually – influenza.

The [Focus On Flu](#) campaign is supported by The City of Cleveland, the Cleveland Department of Public Health, Cleveland Clinic, the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, The MetroHealth System, the Sisters of Charity Health System, and University Hospitals (UH). It is designed to inform residents about the real dangers of influenza, the importance of flu vaccinations and where to find flu shots or the nasal spray vaccine.

“We are all walking through a very difficult time and we know that Ebola is a very dangerous disease. However, there are many other infectious diseases and these are treatable and preventable. That is why I am asking each of you, if you have not yet, go and get your flu shot today,” said Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson. “Do your part!”

The best protection against the flu is vaccination. The CDC recommends an annual flu shot for everyone six months of age and older.

“Getting a flu shot is one of the best things that you can do for your health,” said Michael Anderson, M.D., Chief Medical Officer of University Hospitals Case Medical Center. “It not only offers personal protection to an individual, it also helps stop the spread of the flu to other people – family members, friends, co-workers. I cannot stress enough the importance of getting a flu shot.”

The [Focus On Flu](http://www.FocusOnFlu.org) website (www.FocusOnFlu.org) will list local flu clinics being provided by each of the campaign’s partners, including free and reduced-cost vaccinations, in addition to important links and information about influenza.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), flu activity is still low for the 2014-2015 flu season, but flu cases often begin to increase in October and November, peaking in December, January and February. While each flu season is different and difficult to predict, over the last 30 years flu-associated deaths in the U.S. ranged from 3,000 to 49,000 people. The 2009-10 flu season, which included an outbreak of the H1N1 strain, resulted in 54,000 deaths from flu and pneumonia.

“Nearly 200,000 Americans are hospitalized each year because of the flu and less than half of all Americans get vaccinated. We need to protect our community against the highly contagious influenza virus,” said Toby Cosgrove, M.D., president and CEO, Cleveland Clinic. “As we prepare for a possible, but unlikely Ebola outbreak, we need to prevent the flu and flu-like symptoms, which will go a long way toward reducing public concern.”

In addition to getting vaccinated, preventive actions also can reduce the spread of influenza: Wash your hands often. Avoid close contact with sick people. Stay home from work or school if you are sick with the flu. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

“We need everyone in our community to help prevent the spread of flu,” said Akram Boutros, M.D., president and CEO of The MetroHealth System. “Coughing into your sleeve and constantly washing your hands helps, but the best way to avoid getting flu is to get flu vaccine now. We’d like to see the winter of 2014-15 become the healthiest on record.”

Terry Allan, Health Commissioner at the Cuyahoga County Board of Health, added, “High flu vaccination rates reduce worker absenteeism and missed school days. So getting vaccinated helps to sustain the productivity of our community. Get your flu shot today and be part of the solution.”

As of mid-August, the CDC reported that seven influenza vaccine manufacturers are projecting that as many as 151 million to 156 million doses of influenza vaccine will be available for use in the United States during the 2014-2015 influenza season. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against the flu.

“Flu viruses are constantly changing. Each flu season, different flu viruses can spread, and they can affect people differently based on differences in the immune system. Even healthy children and adults can get very sick from the flu,” said Terrence P. Kessler, president and CEO of the Sisters of Charity Health System. “Join us in sharing the Focus On Flu message with your friends, family and neighbors. Help make sure all Clevelanders understand the dangers of influenza and the importance of flu vaccinations and frequent handwashing!”

EDITOR’S NOTE:

To download videos and graphics for the Focus on Flu campaign, click on the following links:

- Television PSAs: [30-second](#); [15-second](#)
- Radio PSAs: [30-second](#); [15-second](#)
- [Focus on Flu Infographic](#)
- [“Cold or Flu?” Infographic](#)
- Additional resources, including social media graphics, are available at <http://dial.ccf.org> (Username: CCNSSpecial; Password: CCNSSpecial128). To find the flu materials, simply click through the following dropdown boxes: “Dropboxes,” “Cleveland Clinic News Service,” “Special Request,” “Focus on Flu.”

About Cleveland Clinic

Cleveland Clinic is a nonprofit multispecialty academic medical center that integrates clinical and hospital care with research and education. Located in Cleveland, Ohio, it was founded in 1921 by four renowned physicians with a vision of providing outstanding patient care based upon the principles of cooperation, compassion and innovation. Cleveland Clinic has pioneered many medical breakthroughs, including coronary artery bypass surgery and the first face transplant in the United States. *U.S. News & World Report* consistently names Cleveland Clinic as one of the nation’s best hospitals in its annual “America’s Best Hospitals” survey. More than 3,000 full-time salaried physicians and researchers and 11,000 nurses represent 120 medical specialties and subspecialties. The Cleveland Clinic health system includes a main campus near downtown Cleveland, eight community hospitals, more than 75 Northern Ohio outpatient locations, including 16 full-service Family Health Centers, Cleveland Clinic Florida, the Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health in Las Vegas, Cleveland Clinic Canada, and, scheduled to begin seeing patients in 2015, Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi. In 2012, there were 5.1 million outpatient visits throughout the Cleveland Clinic health system and 157,000 hospital admissions. Patients came for treatment from every state and from more than 130 countries. Visit us at www.clevelandclinic.org. Follow us at www.twitter.com/ClevelandClinic.

About The MetroHealth System

The MetroHealth System is a public health system committed to providing health care to everyone in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, and improving the health of the community overall. Its 6,400 employees deliver care to everyone at its main campus, just west of downtown Cleveland, and at 16 health centers. MetroHealth is home to Cuyahoga County’s only Level I Adult Trauma Center and Comprehensive Burn Care Center. In the past year, MetroHealth provided more than one million patient visits in its hospital and health centers.

MetroHealth also is an academic medical center committed to teaching and research; each of

its active physicians holds a faculty appointment at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. MetroHealth has earned Magnet status, which places it in the top 7% of all hospitals nationwide for nursing excellence.

MetroHealth's mission is, "Leading the way to a healthier you and a healthier community through service, teaching, discovery and teamwork." For more information, visit www.metrohealth.org.

About the Sisters of Charity Health System

Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, the Sisters of Charity Health System is the parent corporation for the sponsored ministries of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine in Ohio and South Carolina. The Sisters of Charity Health System solely owns four Catholic hospitals: St. Vincent Charity Medical Center in Cleveland, Ohio; Mercy Medical Center in Canton, Ohio; and Providence Hospital and Providence Orthopedic Hospital in Columbia, South Carolina. In a 50/50 joint venture with University Hospitals of Cleveland, the Sisters of Charity Health System also co-owns St. John Medical Center in Westlake, Ohio. The Sisters of Charity Health System also oversees three grantmaking foundations located in Cleveland, Ohio; Canton, Ohio; and Columbia, South Carolina. Each foundation sponsors significant community initiatives and collaborations that address causes and consequences of poverty. Other organizations within the health system include Joseph's Home, Early Childhood Resource Center, Healthy Learners, and the South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families. The Sisters of Charity Health System also provides residential elder care services at Regina Health Center and Light of Hearts Villa. Light of Hearts Villa is jointly sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. Learn more at www.sistersofcharityhealth.org.

About University Hospitals

University Hospitals, the second largest employer in Northeast Ohio with 25,000 employees, serves the needs of patients through an integrated network of 15 hospitals, 28 outpatient health centers and primary care physician offices in 15 counties. At the core of our \$3.5 billion health system is University Hospitals Case Medical Center, ranked among America's 50 best hospitals by U.S. News & World Report in all 12 methodology-ranked specialties. The primary affiliate of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, UH Case Medical Center is home to some of the most prestigious clinical and research centers of excellence in the nation, including cancer, pediatrics, women's health, orthopaedics, radiology, neuroscience, cardiology and cardiovascular surgery, digestive health, transplantation and genetics. Its main campus includes UH Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital, ranked among the top children's hospitals in the nation; UH MacDonald Women's Hospital, Ohio's only hospital for women; and UH Seidman Cancer Center, part of the NCI-designated Case Comprehensive Cancer Center at Case Western Reserve University. For more information, go to www.uhhospitals.org.

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