VERMONT | **Department of Health**
Agency of Human Services

VNA of Chittenden & Grand Isle Counties Works to Vaccinate Vermont Against the Flu

Vermont Department of Health Observes National Influenza Vaccination Week Dec. 5-11 – Urges everyone 6 months and older to get vaccinated!

For Immediate Release: Dec. 9, 2010
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BURLINGTON – Church Hindes, president and chief executive officer of the Visiting Nurse Association of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties, will sometimes look out at the parking lot during flu clinics.

"We try to watch if an elderly person is having a hard time getting out of their car and walking to the clinic," Hindes said. "We will send someone out and offer to give them a shot right there in their car. Our clinics are run by nurses and nurses are caring people. If you need extra help, you will get it."

Hindes looks forward to the flu season each year. He considers the season an "upbeat" time when Vermonters step forward and protect themselves and their families by getting vaccinated against the flu.

The Vermont Assembly of Home Health Agencies and Visiting Nurse Associations partner with the Vermont Department of Health each year to provide flu vaccinations at public clinic sites statewide.

This flu season will be far less intense for the VNA of Chittenden and Grand Isle Counties than a year ago. Last year at the request of the Health Department, the VNA hosted 171 adult clinics and 57 school clinics, providing 30,000 H1N1 flu vaccinations and 6,800 seasonal flu vaccinations.

This year there is only one vaccine for the 2010-11 flu season, and it protects against three different flu viruses that are circulating now, including the H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last year.

"Everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated, this year and every year, to protect yourself and everyone around you," said Health Commissioner Wendy Davis, MD. "This is especially important for older people, pregnant women, and those who have chronic health conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease, and to protect those too young to get vaccinated themselves."

Hindes said the importance of getting vaccinated this year should be an "easy sell," especially among the older Vermonters he sees at the same clinic locations, year after year. The VNA expects to staff more than 50 public and senior housing clinics this flu season.

"Our primary job is to make it easy to get your shot," Hindes said, "And if we make it convenient, they will come."

Flu vaccine is widely available this year, in doctor's offices and many public settings. There are still a number of public clinics scheduled through the end of the month. To find an adult flu shot clinic in you area, visit: healthvermont.gov, then select the flu clinic schedule.

Flu Vaccine Facts:

- The flu is more than just a nuisance. Influenza can be a serious and sometimes life-threatening disease. Flu and its related complications can cause hospitalizations and even death.
- The flu vaccine is updated each season to protect against the three flu viruses that research shows will cause the most illness. At this time, the vaccine is well matched to the flu strains now circulating in the U.S.
- Because flu viruses are always changing, last season's flu vaccine may not protect against new viruses, and getting vaccinated every year is the only way to stay protected each season.

- The flu shot cannot give you the flu. Flu vaccine is used to prevent the flu, not treat the flu. Over the past 50 years, flu vaccines have been shown to be safe.
- With flu activity increasing, family and friends gathering for the holidays, and cold weather setting in, now is a great time to get a flu vaccine.

For more information about flu, go to **flu.gov**, **healthvermont.gov** or dial 2-1-1.

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