



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oklahoma HMO provides tips for avoiding influenza

Over 100 Oklahomans have died in the past year from influenza

OKLAHOMA – In the 2016-2017 influenza season, 110 Oklahomans died from influenza-associated issues, according to the Oklahoma State Department of Health. With the 2017-2018 flu season approaching, GlobalHealth, an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization (HMO), is encouraging Oklahomans to get a flu shot and remain aware of the dangers of influenza.

“As the fall and winter months approach, Oklahomans are at greater risk of contracting the flu,” said Dr. Wesley Williams, medical director at GlobalHealth. “The best way to prevent the spread of influenza during the coming flu season is to get vaccinated. The more people who are immunized, the less people, including those who are most susceptible to influenza’s potentially severe complications, will contract the disease.”

This September, GlobalHealth is offering the following tips for Oklahomans to avoid influenza and stay healthy through flu season, which typically lasts from October to May.

Know the illness. Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus. It can affect both healthy individuals to those with chronic medical conditions. Severity of symptoms can range from cough, fever, body aches and discomfort to more extreme consequences from a previous illness potentially ending in hospitalizations or death.

Get the vaccine. The single best way to avoid the flu is to get vaccinated each year, according to the CDC. Ask your primary care physician about getting vaccinated. In addition, vaccinations are readily available at local pharmacies. Aside from benefitting the individual receiving the influenza vaccine, the injection can benefit entire communities. When more people get vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through the community. The flu virus is different every year and this makes it extremely important to be vaccinated every year.

Watch for symptoms. The main symptoms associated with the flu include: cough, sore throat, fever, runny nose, body aches, headache and fatigue. If you recognize these symptoms in yourself, stay home. This practice prevents the spread of virus among colleagues. Additionally,

avoid touching objects that may have been used by influenza carriers. Any way you can stop the spread of the influenza virus will not only be beneficial to you, but also to those around you.

Practice good health habits. In addition to being vaccinated, being conscious of your health habits can be the best strategy for combatting contagious viruses such as influenza. First, make sure you wash your hands thoroughly. Second, cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough. This simple barrier method can limit the spread of airborne transmitted illnesses. Finally, avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Because an individual cannot constantly wash their hands, avoiding the potential transfer of these pathogens will limit their impact on our community.

About GlobalHealth

GlobalHealth is changing health insurance in Oklahoma. As an industry leader, GlobalHealth is an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization covering more than 44,000 individuals in all 77 Oklahoma counties. Working proactively with each member, GlobalHealth engages a personalized management plan to address their specific needs and ensure the best possible health outcomes. GlobalHealth utilizes cutting edge, predictive data technology as a foundation to deliver improved healthcare as part of its commitment to making health insurance more affordable. Its membership includes state and education employees, federal employees, municipal employees and Medicare Advantage members. GlobalHealth employs more than 250 associates throughout Oklahoma. To learn more, visit www.GlobalHealth.com.

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