



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 25, 2019

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Oklahoma HMO encourages seniors to prevent flu, colds by washing hands

National Handwashing Awareness Week taking place Dec. 1-7

OKLAHOMA – With cold and flu season in full swing, Oklahoma seniors are more at risk of getting sick this winter due to their lowered immune response. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hand-washing can prevent one in three diarrhea-related illnesses and one in five infections, including the flu. This is why it is important for seniors, and those who care for them, to be proactive about washing their hands.

Dec. 1-7 is National Handwashing Awareness Week, and GlobalHealth, an Oklahoma-based health insurance provider, is sharing information to educate Oklahomans on the importance of hand hygiene.

“Because our immune systems weaken with age, it’s important for seniors to wash their hands regularly to guard against germs that contribute to colds and other diseases,” said Dr. Wesley Williams, medical director at GlobalHealth. “In addition to washing your hands, remember to not cough or sneeze into them and do not put your fingers in your eyes, nose or mouth. While practicing good hand hygiene can help stop the spread of germs and sickness this winter, it’s also important to get a flu shot each year.”

GlobalHealth is providing information to help raise awareness of the importance of washing your hands regularly.

When to wash your hands. Four out of five germs and 80% of infectious diseases cause illness and are usually spread by touching something, such as handling food, emptying trash, using the toilet or handling pets and their waste. You should always wash your hands before eating, treating wounds or caring for a sick person, and inserting or removing contact lenses.

How to wash properly. You should always wash your hands with soap and clean water for at least 20 seconds to ensure they are properly cleaned. If you need a timer, you can hum “Happy Birthday” twice. Remember to scrub all surfaces, including between your fingers, under your

fingernails and on the backs of your wrists. Be sure to rinse your hands under clean, running water, which removes the dirt and microbes you loosened when scrubbing.

Handwashing for seniors. Diseases, such as the flu and the common cold, can also cause seniors to develop infections like pneumonia or complicate existing conditions like asthma and heart disease. With more than 200 different viruses able to cause the common cold, the CDC says that hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs that contribute to dangerous diseases for seniors.

About GlobalHealth

GlobalHealth is changing health insurance in Oklahoma. As an industry leader, GlobalHealth is an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization covering individuals in all 77 Oklahoma counties. Working proactively with its members, 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, education and municipal employees, federal employees, and individuals who are eligible for Medicare. To learn more, visit www.GlobalHealth.com.

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