FDA Approves Vaccines for the 2011-2012 Influenza Season

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SILVER SPRING, Md., July 18, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced today that it has approved the influenza vaccine formulation for the 2011-2012 vaccine that will be used by the six manufacturers licensed to produce and distribute influenza vaccine for the United States.

(Logo: http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20090824/FDALOGO [1])

Vaccination remains the cornerstone of preventing influenza, a contagious respiratory disease caused by influenza virus strains. The vaccine formulation protects against the three virus strains that surveillance indicates will be most common during the upcoming season and includes the same virus strains used for the 2010-2011 influenza season.

Between 5 percent and 20 percent of the U.S. population develops influenza each year, leading to more than 200,000 hospitalizations from related complications, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Influenza-related deaths vary yearly, ranging from a low of about 3,000 to a high of 49,000 people.

"Vaccines to prevent seasonal influenza have a long and successful track record of safety and effectiveness in the United States," said Karen Midthun, M.D., director of FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research. "It is important to get vaccinated every year, even if the strains in the vaccine do not change, because the protection received the previous year will diminish over time and may be too low to provide protection into the next year."

In addition to the important role that health care providers play in recommending influenza vaccination for their patients, influenza vaccination of health care personnel is also important to protect themselves, their patients, their family, and the community from influenza. The FDA urges health care organizations to encourage their members to follow CDC's Advisory Committe
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