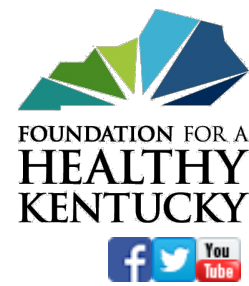




Kentucky Foundation
for Medical Care



**EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL
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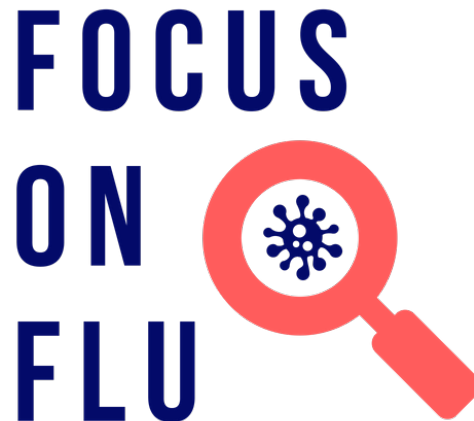
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Statewide Flu Shot Day is September 26 Flu Prevention Campaign Emphasizes “Get Your Shot, Consult a Doc, Prevent the Spread”

FRANKFORT, KY (September 18, 2018) “Focus on Flu” is a statewide campaign launched in Frankfort today to prevent another epidemic-level flu season like the one last year that hit every region of the state, infected 10,500 Kentuckians and led to the deaths of 325 people, including five children.^[i] The campaign urges Kentuckians to get their flu shots on Kentucky Flu Shot Day, which is September 26, or at least by the end of October, for maximum protection.

Officials from the Kentucky Medical Association (KMA), the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky (FHKy) and the Kentucky Foundation for Medical Care (KFMC) all got their flu shots today at a news conference as they launched the Focus on Flu campaign partnership, as did Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Adam Meier. In addition to boosting flu vaccinations, the campaign is focused on helping Kentuckians understand when they should consult a doctor regarding signs that they have the flu and promoting public health flu prevention strategies.



“Flu activity has already started in some areas of our state,” said KMA president Bruce Scott, M.D. An ear, nose and throat physician, Dr. Scott added: “The ‘Focus on Flu’ campaign has three simple messages: Get your shot, consult a doc, and stop the spread. And getting your shot is the first and arguably most effective weapon against the flu.”

“We know that annual flu shots work,” said Ben Chandler, FHKy president and CEO. “The sad thing is, Kentuckians who live on very low incomes are less likely to get the shot, but more likely to have the kinds of chronic conditions that make them more vulnerable to serious flu complications. Infants and those with compromised immune systems cannot get the shot. These more vulnerable populations get a stronger measure of protection when the majority of community members are vaccinated.”

Dr. Brent Wright, Associate Dean for Rural Health Innovation at the University of Louisville, added: “After getting your shot, the second step is knowing who to call if you think you have the virus. Studies show that flu antiviral drugs work best when they’re started within two days of getting sick. It is also extremely important to consult your physician if you are at high risk for complications from the flu.”

The Focus on Flu campaign also emphasizes preventing the spread of flu by washing your hands frequently with soap and water, covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and limiting your contact with others if you do get sick. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after a fever has subsided.

“Last year’s influenza season was one of the worst on record, which underscores the value of this partnership among the Kentucky Medical Association, the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and the Kentucky public health systems to educate the public about flu and promote vaccine,” said Dr. Jeffery Howard, commissioner, Kentucky Department for Public Health. “Influenza is a disease that can be prevented by vaccination and we encourage Kentuckians to get vaccinated at their health provider’s office, pharmacy, or local health department as soon as vaccines are available.”

Allison Adams, president of the Kentucky Health Departments Association, said, “We are excited to be a partner in this campaign to promote to all Kentuckians the importance of getting your annual flu vaccine. Local health departments stand ready to provide a local presence for flu prevention education and services in all 120 counties across our Commonwealth.”

The Focus on Flu campaign includes public service announcements, education materials, a social media campaign, and partnerships to make flu shots more available in Kentucky communities. Many local health departments and other partners will be using “Focus on Flu” bandage strips when they administer flu shots. Dr. Scott, Chandler and Dr. Wright encourage Kentuckians to post a selfie photo of their arm with the bandage on social media with the hashtags, #gotmyshot and #focusonflu.

According to the National Institutes of Health, costs associated with the flu in Kentucky total more than \$352 million each year.^[iii] The flu vaccine can reduce the risk of infection as much as 60 percent and also lessen symptoms,

yet just 38 percent of Kentucky adults and 43.5 percent of Kentucky children get their flu shots.^[iii]

“Focus on Flu” campaign materials are available at <https://kyma.org/focus-on-flu/>.

About the Kentucky Medical Association

Established in 1851, the Kentucky Medical Association is a professional organization for physicians throughout the Commonwealth. The KMA works on behalf of physicians and the patients they serve to ensure the delivery of quality, affordable healthcare.

Members of the KMA share a mission of commitment to the profession and service to the citizens of this Commonwealth that extends across rural and urban areas. From solo practitioners to academicians to large, multi-specialty groups, KMA is the ONLY state association representing every specialty and type of medical practice in Kentucky.

About the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky

Funded by an endowment, the mission of the nonpartisan Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky is to address the unmet health needs of Kentuckians by developing and influencing policy, improving access to care, reducing health risks and disparities, and promoting health equity. Since the Foundation opened its doors in 2001, it has invested nearly \$28 million in health policy research, advocacy, and demonstration project grants across the Commonwealth. Follow the Foundation on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#), and visit our website at www.healthy-ky.org.

About the Kentucky Foundation for Medical Care

Founded by the Kentucky Medical Association in 1971, the Kentucky Foundation for Medical Care (KFMC) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization committed to improving the health of all Kentuckians through medical education and public health initiatives.

[i] <https://healthalerts.ky.gov/Documents/fluactivity.pdf>

[ii] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3479051/>

[iii]

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/fluview/reportshtml/reporti1617/reportii/index.html>