



## News for Immediate Release

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### Department of Aging Stresses Importance of Getting a Flu Shot

Pharmacies Recognized for Helping in the Fight Against the Flu

**Mechanicsburg** – Secretary of Aging Brian Duke today marked National Influenza Vaccination Week by urging older Pennsylvanians to get a flu shot. Ninety percent of flu-related deaths and more than half of flu-related hospitalizations occur in people age 65 and older, according to national statistics.

"Influenza is among the most common respiratory illnesses, affecting millions of people each year," Duke said during an event at a Rite Aid Pharmacy in Mechanicsburg, Cumberland County. "One of the best ways for older Pennsylvanians to stay healthy during this flu season is to get a flu shot."

On average, five to 20 percent of the U.S. population develops influenza each year. To encourage wider public vaccination, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention established National Influenza Vaccination Week in 2005.

During the 2010-11 flu season, nearly 20,000 influenza cases were reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Twenty-one percent of the cases involved people 65 or older. While influenza activity has been intermittent so far this season, the flu is highly contagious and can pose serious and life-threatening health risks, especially to older adults and young children.

The Department of Aging's PrimeTime Health program coordinates funding from the Department of Health to carry out flu immunization clinics offered by local Area Agencies on Aging.

The department is also recognizing public partners like pharmacies for the important role they play in making flu shots available to the public.

"Rite Aid is committed to helping our customers stay healthy and that's especially true during flu season," said Karen Staniforth, Vice President for Pharmacy at Rite Aid. "By having flu shots available at all Rite Aid pharmacies, we're making it easier than ever for our customers to protect themselves this flu season."

To find out more information on the PrimeTime Health program or locate a flu immunization clinic, visit [www.aging.state.pa.us](http://www.aging.state.pa.us).

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