

Arkansas Influenza Immunization Campaign

FACTSHEET

Status:

- Influenza can cause mild to severe illness and results in 25-50 million infections in the United States each year.
- Influenza virus causes more than 200,000 people to be hospitalized and approximately 36,000 deaths per year in the United States. (Arkansas statistics are not available.)
- The influenza vaccine offers 70% to 90% protection against infection and has been proven to be effective in reducing severity of disease. Influenza vaccinations are also cost-effective in reducing lost workdays and school days, physician visits, and complications due to secondary illnesses. Higher influenza vaccination coverage levels in Arkansas would reduce much of this illness, death and associated economic costs.

Program:

The Arkansas Influenza Immunization Campaign will allow the Arkansas Department of Health to expand the provision of free flu vaccinations to Arkansans who would not otherwise have an opportunity to receive the vaccine. Funding will be provided for both adults and children. The program will be based upon the department's past successes in dispensing the vaccine through mass clinics held statewide.

Impact:

- New state funding, combined with available federal vaccines, will allow the state to provide approximately 500,000 people with an estimated 685,000 doses of vaccine. (Individuals less than 9 years of age are recommended to receive two doses of vaccine.) This is more than double the number of doses provided through the department in 2008.
- The most significant improvement will be among children, with approximately 500,000 doses available compared to 104,000 doses in 2008.

How it Works:

- With the historical relationship and cooperation of state, county, municipal agencies and schools, the Department of Health will coordinate the efforts through its local health units with local partners to provide the vaccinations for adults and children.

Administration/oversight: Through appropriation of funds by the Arkansas General Assembly, the Arkansas Influenza Immunization Campaign will be administered by the Arkansas Department of Health.

Funding to support continued disbursement of existing adult vaccines and expansion of vaccines to all public school students will be made to the Arkansas Department of Health, Infectious Disease Branch.

