



Children Across America Educate Community About Influenza Prevention



(NAPSA)—Each year, school-children learn math, science, history—but now they can also learn how to help make a difference in influenza prevention. Through the Spread the Word—*NOT* the Flu! educational program, children are being empowered to help make a difference by educating their families and communities about influenza prevention.

Unlike the common cold, influenza is a contagious respiratory disease that spreads quickly and can hit hard. In fact, it is estimated that more than 20,000 children younger than 5 years old are hospitalized annually due to influenza, and approximately 92 die as a result of this serious disease. Additionally, influenza can interrupt school and work schedules for up to two weeks. For instance, it is estimated that, each year in the United States, influenza causes children to miss approximately 38 million school days, and for every three school days that are missed by a child with influenza, a parent misses almost one workday.

“It is very important for people to understand that influenza can be a preventable illness,” said Dr. Andrew Eisenberg, M.D., MHA, FAAFP, associate professor, School of Rural Public Health, Texas A&M University. “Simple measures such as receiving an annual influenza vaccination—which, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], is the best defense against influenza—can help keep individuals, households and communities healthy.”

To help increase discussion within families about the serious-

Helpful Tips You and Your Children Can Follow to Help Prevent Influenza

- Get an annual influenza vaccination.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and keep your distance from others when you are sick.
- Stay home from work, school and errands when sick with influenza.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth prior to hand washing.
- Practice other good health habits, such as staying physically active and getting enough sleep.

Visit www.SpreadTheWordNotTheFlu.com for more information on how to help prevent influenza and its spread or how to participate in the Spread the Word—*NOT* the Flu! educational program.



ness of influenza, Novartis Vaccines has teamed up with Families Fighting Flu and Weekly Reader Corporation Custom Publishing to launch a national educational program geared toward students in grades 3 through 8 called Spread the Word—*NOT* the Flu! The program aims to encourage children to talk with their peers, parents (or guardians) and communities about the seriousness of influenza and ways to help prevent its spread, including the importance of receiving an annual influenza vaccination.

“Influenza affects children and those in close contact with them, including teachers, parents and siblings,” said Richard Kanowitz, president of Families Fighting Flu,

and someone who has experienced the devastating affects of influenza firsthand. “That is why it is important to educate children about the dangers of influenza and how they can help protect themselves, their families and their communities by sharing information on how to help prevent influenza and its spread.”

As a part of Spread the Word—*NOT* the Flu!, students will learn influenza facts, such as how the virus spreads, what its symptoms are and who is at risk for potentially serious complications, as well as why people should protect themselves and what measures can be taken to prevent the spread of influenza. In addition, students will be encouraged to put their key learnings into practice by entering the “Influenza Ambassador Award Contest,” in which they must design a Public Service Announcement (PSA) advertisement that will educate the public about the dangers of contracting influenza and explain how the public can help prevent the spread of influenza. Upon entering the contest, students will have the chance to win a laptop computer or a college scholarship of up to \$15,000.

This school year, parents should talk to their children about the seriousness of influenza and remember that maintaining a healthy home is the first step in combating this potentially fatal disease in their community.

For More Information:

To learn more about the seriousness of influenza and the Spread the Word—*NOT* the Flu! educational program, visit www.SpreadTheWordNotTheFlu.com.