

Vaccine effectiveness in US may be higher than other countries this flu season

(February 16th, 2018) JEFFERSON CITY, MO – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced yesterday that, as of February 3, preliminary numbers show the flu vaccine in the United States was 36 percent effective in preventing influenza A and B this flu season. The estimate is 25 percent for influenza A (H3N2); 67 percent for influenza A (H1N1); and 42 percent against influenza B. Widely reported estimates for both Australia and Canada put their vaccine effectiveness around 10 percent.

Young children are at higher risk than most people for severe flu complications that can lead to death. So far this flu season, 63 flu deaths have been reported in children. However, the CDC estimates that the flu vaccine effectiveness is actually **higher** for children, at 59 percent.

DHSS director Dr. Randall Williams says, “Back on Oct. 10 we predicted this would be a difficult flu season and even now, in February, our message remains the same: get your flu shot, especially for young children who are particularly prone to getting sick and suffering from severe complications. Everyone should get their flu shot, though, especially those who come into contact with children or the elderly, which is virtually everyone.”

Missouri data shows that the 2017-2018 influenza season may be peaking, but it there are several weeks to go until it’s over. That means there is still time to get the flu vaccine. People who are vaccinated but still get the flu typically experience a faster recovery, reduced risk for complications or hospitalization, and a shorter period of being contagious. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services recommends that all Missourians get their flu shot as soon as possible to provide the most protection during the ongoing flu season. Find the closest location to get a flu vaccine at

<http://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/influenza/>

About the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services: The department seeks to be the leader in protecting health and keeping people safe. More information about DHSS can be found at health.mo.gov.