

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Now is the time to get vaccinated for the flu**

BISMARCK, ND – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is reminding all North Dakotans to get vaccinated against influenza. According to Abbi Berg, Vaccines for Children Manager with the NDDoH Immunization Program, “Getting the flu vaccine is the easiest way to protect yourself, as well as your friends and family, from the flu.”

Everyone six months and older should receive the flu vaccine. Anyone can get the flu, including healthy individuals. This year, the NDDoH partnered with the Capital Ice Synchronized Skating teams and Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health to highlight the importance of influenza vaccination.

Two years ago, several skaters nearly missed a national competition when they came down with flu. Ever since, team members and their families work with Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health to get vaccinated to make sure the athletes stay healthy and active throughout the winter and spring months.

“It made for a long trip and lots of uncertainty since we had skaters battling to get well to compete,” said Becky Gallion, director of Capital Ice Synchronized Skating. “I’m proud of my girls for taking this step to stay healthy. After hundreds of hours of practicing, they deserve to compete to their fullest potential.”

When more people get the flu vaccine, the virus does not spread as easily and quickly to those who are vulnerable to serious complications from the flu. Those who are more likely to face serious complications include infants and young children, pregnant women, people older than 65, and those with chronic medical conditions.

Influenza is a respiratory disease. The most common symptoms are fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills and body aches. In North Dakota, influenza activity begins in the fall and typically peaks between January and March. The first influenza cases for the 2018-19 season have already been reported in the state. Health officials say that people can get vaccinated anytime during the influenza season, but the best time to get vaccinated is as soon as the vaccine

becomes available or by the end of October. Vaccination does not protect against other respiratory diseases or the pathogens that cause “stomach flu.”

Many health care providers have already begun offering the influenza vaccine. North Dakotans are encouraged to contact their health care provider, local public health unit, or pharmacist for information about influenza vaccine availability in their area.

For more information, contact Abbi Berg or Jill Baber, NDDoH, at 701.328.2378. Information about influenza can be found at [www.ndflu.com](http://www.ndflu.com).