

Date

Name

Title

Organization

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City, State Postal Code

Dear Name:

**Recent news reports of a potential flu vaccine delay and shortage could discourage millions of Americans from getting their annual flu shots. This could leave many at risk for life-threatening influenza (flu) and pneumonia infections, especially for the nearly 16 million Americans with diabetes and those with other chronic diseases.**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is conducting a campaign to encourage people with diabetes to still get their pneumococcal and annual flu vaccinations. People with diabetes are about three times more likely to die with flu and pneumonia than people without diabetes. Currently, 10,000 to 30,000 people with diabetes die each year with flu and pneumonia. Other adults at high risk for deadly cases of the flu or pneumonia include people aged 65 years or older, people with weakened immune systems (such as HIV/AIDS or those receiving chemotherapy treatments), and people with other chronic diseases such as kidney, liver, lung, and heart disease.

As flu season approaches, we need your help to encourage your readers to get vaccinated against flu and pneumonia. Many of them might have diabetes or have family members and friends with the disease. If they have not been offered the vaccine, people with diabetes need to ask their health care providers to vaccinate them. People with chronic medical conditions, including diabetes, should be vaccinated early in the flu season (September-October), but people can and should be vaccinated throughout the flu season, which normally extends through February. Early is best, but later is better than never.

As you prepare for your fall and winter issues, we hope you will consider a story to address this pressing health concern. Possible angles for story development include the following:

- Encourage receiving pneumococcal and annual flu vaccines as part of a personal preventive health care plan for this fall and winter.
- Inform people of the need for chronic or high-risk patients to receive their pneumococcal and annual flu vaccinations regardless of the delay and potential vaccine shortage this year.
- Use a flu season news flash: identify high-risk populations and places to get flu shots, and state when to receive vaccine (between October and February are the most opportune times).

We have enclosed additional information to help you develop a story. Please contact me at 770-488-5131 if you have any questions or want to speak with a CDC spokesperson to gain further insight. For background information about the *Diabetes and Flu/ Pneumococcal Campaign*, visit our Web site at [www.cdc.gov/diabetes/projects/cdc-flu.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/projects/cdc-flu.htm).

Thank you for your assistance with this important issue.

Sincerely,



Mike Greenwell

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Enclosures