



News Release

Pharmacists Highlight the Importance of the Flu Shot; Encourage Government to Broaden Access

October 19, 2018 (St. John's, NL) With the influenza vaccine being made available as of next week, the Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL) is reminding residents to get the flu shot.

“The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs,” said community pharmacist Trent White. “It can cause mild to severe illnesses and at times, could lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu shot each year.”

The National Advisory Committee on Immunizations (NACI) recommends that everyone six months of age and older get vaccinated against the flu annually.

In most other provinces, eight of ten now, pharmacists have the ability to vaccinate for flu as part of the universal program. However, in Newfoundland and Labrador, unless residents hold a public drug card or have private coverage for flu shots, they must pay a fee at the pharmacy that includes the cost and administration of the vaccine.

“We strongly encourage the Provincial Government to reconsider their position on the provincial flu immunization program,” said Steve Gillingham, PANL President. “Providing public funding for pharmacist delivered flu shots would increase the number of residents being immunized, thereby alleviating the strain on emergency rooms and physician offices and freeing up these resources for more complex care patients. Taking a long-term view and investing in the program now will reduce health care spending in the future while increasing health outcomes.”

PANL encourages everyone to speak with their community pharmacist about the importance of getting immunized against influenza.

PANL is the voice of pharmacists, with membership of over 700 pharmacists, 160 pharmacy students and 150 pharmacies. PANL advocates for pharmacists as health care team members integral to the effective and efficient delivery of health services in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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Media Contact:

Jennifer Collingwood
Executive Director

Pharmacists' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador

jcollingwood@panl.net

709-753-7881

709-691-2208