



## News Release

### **Pharmacists Encourage Residents to Protect Themselves Against the Flu**

**October 18, 2019 (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. 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," said Janice Audeau, community pharmacist and President, PANL Board of Directors.

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

Residents can be vaccinated at most pharmacies throughout the province and those holding a public drug card will receive the vaccine free of charge. The Provincial Government has committed to implementing a universal flu vaccine program starting in 2020 where everyone in the province will be able to get the flu shot at their local pharmacy free of charge.

"PANL has been advocating for a publicly funded universal flu program for some time, as it will improve access to immunization throughout Newfoundland and Labrador," added Ms. Audeau. "Pharmacists are highly accessible healthcare providers who are available evenings and weekends in most communities throughout the province. Pharmacist-delivered flu shots will increase the number of residents being immunized and ultimately, alleviate the strain on emergency rooms due to influenza related respiratory illness. We are pleased that the Provincial Government has agreed to broaden the program beginning next year," added Ms. Audeau.

PANL encourages residents to speak with their 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](mailto:jcollingwood@panl.net)

709-753-7881