

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Rappahannock Area Health Department Offers Free Flu Vaccinations Drive-Thru Events in Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania**

(Fredericksburg, Va.)— Getting a flu vaccine is the single best way to protect against the flu, and is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Rappahannock Area Health District (RAHD) will conduct public health emergency exercises offering free flu shots in Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania at special clinic events. These will be drive-thru events and all safety precautions will be observed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Saturday, October 3, 2020 – 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., Hugh Mercer Elementary School, 2100 Cowan Boulevard, Fredericksburg, VA
- Tuesday, October 6, 2020 – 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., Fire Company 2, 1700 Volunteer Lane, Spotsylvania, VA

These events offer free quadrivalent flu vaccines (covers four types of flu) to residents ages 9 and up, from the convenience of your vehicle. Vaccine supplies are limited and will be available on a first- come, first- served basis until the end time of the event, or until the supply of flu vaccine runs out. Please wear a mask and short-sleeved shirt or sleeves that roll up for easy access to the upper arm.

The purpose of these exercises is to simulate mass vaccination events in which the health department and local agencies would work together so community members could be vaccinated efficiently during a time of emergency. Rappahannock Medical Reserve Corps volunteers will assist health department staff with this exercise. The vaccine is provided by the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Emergency Preparedness.

“This year it is more important than ever to get a flu shot,” said RAHD Acting Director Dr. Denise Bonds. “According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 will likely continue into the fall and winter and may overlap with the flu season. With the possibility of both viruses being in our communities at the same time, it is vital that everyone age 6 months or older get their yearly flu shot.”

“Other prevention measures include practicing good hygiene by frequently washing your hands or using alcohol-based sanitizers when water is unavailable,” Dr. Bonds added. “Always cover your cough and sneezes, stay at home when you are sick, and limit your contact with others who are sick.”

The CDC estimates that each year over the last decade, influenza has caused 9 to 45 million illnesses, 140,000 to 810,000 hospitalizations and 12,000 to 61,000 deaths.

For more information about the flu, visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/influenza-flu-in-virginia/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/influenza-flu-in-virginia/) or [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov). For more information about the Rappahannock Area Health District, visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/Rappahannock](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/Rappahannock).

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**Media note: news media access to these clinics is available ONLY by advance request and appointment. Access will be escorted, for the purposes of limited photography and videography from a distance. These measures are necessary to ensure patient privacy and operational security. For more information and to request news media access, contact Allison Balmes-John, [allison.balmes@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:allison.balmes@vdh.virginia.gov).**