

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

13 June 2008

Healthy mobs vaccinate against flu and pneumo

Queensland Health is encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to get vaccinated against influenza and pneumococcal disease this winter.

Those at high risk of developing serious problems from these illnesses include older people and those with chronic health problems like diabetes, asthma and kidney disease.

Darling Downs public health medical officer Dr Neil Parker said that it is important for Indigenous families to consider vaccination.

"Influenza and pneumococcal disease are very serious and can be life-threatening, especially if you have chronic health problems."

"So much illness and hospitalization, and many deaths, can be prevented by having timely immunisation against disease," Dr Parker said.

The National Immunisation Program provides free influenza and pneumococcal disease vaccination each year for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 15 to 49 who have a chronic illness or who are risk of developing a chronic illness.

"I encourage all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to discuss immunisation with their local Indigenous health worker, doctor, community health service or local council clinic to ensure those people in your family and community who are most at risk are protected."

"Once you have your flu shot, it takes about 10 days to develop good immunity to the influenza virus."

"The flu vaccine is safe and is your best protection against this serious illness. It can't give you the flu, because it doesn't contain the live influenza virus."

"Immunisation is a very simple and effective way to prevent disease and local health workers can show you how to keep a record of what vaccinations your family has been given and when they are due for their next vaccination," Dr Parker said.

Ends

Media contact: Robyn Kinne, Senior Public Affairs Officer, Southern Population Health Services, Queensland Health (07) 3000 9103 or 0402 287 027

Date: 13 June 2008