



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sept. 6, 2016**

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## **Oklahoma HMO recommends getting flu vaccination early**

*GlobalHealth encourages Oklahomans to receive flu vaccination by end of October*

**OKLAHOMA** – As fall approaches, it is important to remember the football is not the only thing being passed around. Influenza, commonly known as the flu, can cause mild to severe illness and usually begins in the fall and continues into the winter months. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the estimated number of influenza-associated illnesses prevented by the flu vaccination is 1.9 million. GlobalHealth, an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization, recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older by the end of October.

“Many might not consider the flu a serious health issue, but millions of people are sickened, hundreds of thousands are hospitalized and thousands die every year because of it,” said John Wiscaver, senior vice president and chief strategy officer at GlobalHealth. “There are so many ways that the flu can spread, which is why we recommend getting vaccinated early.”

GlobalHealth is offering Oklahoma families the following tips to avoid contracting and spreading the flu:

**Get vaccinated.** It is recommended to get a flu vaccination by the end of October since it takes up to two weeks for the vaccination antibodies to provide protection against the virus. The vaccination makes the flu less severe if you do get sick and helps you from spreading it to friends and family. Schedule an appointment with your primary care physician (PCP) or in-network pharmacy to receive the flu vaccine.

**Practice prevention.** To avoid the flu, taking preventive steps will help you and others from contracting the flu virus. The best way to keep from spreading the flu is to avoid being around others if you are infected. You should not return to work until you have not had a fever for 24 hours. If you feel yourself getting a sore throat, chills, muscle aches, a cough, headaches, or a stuffy nose, see your PCP right away.

**Sneeze and cough properly.** The best way to avoid spreading germs is to sneeze or cough into a tissue or your elbow. Using your hands allows the virus to spread when you touch objects around

your home or office. If you do use your hands, you should wash them immediately for at least 20 seconds with soap.

**Wash hands frequently.** The best way to prevent spreading and contracting the flu is to wash your hands, especially if you have been in public places and had contact with stair rails, elevator buttons, etc. If you are not immediately able to wash your hands, using antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer will also help. In addition, you should regularly wipe down your desk area and areas of your house that everyone touches, such as door knobs and countertops.

### **About GlobalHealth**

GlobalHealth is changing health insurance in Oklahoma. As an industry leader, GlobalHealth is an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization covering more than 45,000 individuals in all 77 Oklahoma counties. Working proactively with each member, GlobalHealth engages a personalized management plan to address their specific needs and ensure the best possible health outcomes. GlobalHealth utilizes cutting edge, predictive data technology as a foundation to deliver improved healthcare as part of its commitment to making health insurance more affordable. Its membership includes state and education employees, federal employees, municipal employees, Medicare Advantage members and private employers. GlobalHealth employs more than 250 associates throughout Oklahoma. To learn more, visit [www.globalhealth.com](http://www.globalhealth.com).

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