PSA

Date: September 14, 2020
To: All Media
From: Stephanie Krell, PIO for Unified Command
Subject: **Influenza (Flu) Vaccine and Prevention**

During the fall months, the flu season returns, peaking between December and February with the potential to last until May.

Like COVID-19, the flu is a contagious respiratory illness but is caused by very different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2) and flu is caused by infection with influenza viruses.

While nothing is certain this season, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), believes that flu viruses and viruses that cause COVID-19 will both be spreading. The CDC recommends that all people six (6) months and older get a yearly flu vaccine.

Getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19, but flu vaccines have been shown to reduce hospitalization and death, according to the CDC. Getting a flu vaccine this fall will be more important than ever, not only to reduce your risk from flu but also to help conserve potentially scarce health care resources. There is no evidence that getting a flu vaccine will increase your risk is contracting COVID-19.

To address the importance of influenza vaccination, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDC will maximize flu vaccination by increasing availability of vaccine, including purchasing an additional 2 million doses of pediatric flu vaccine and 9.3 million doses of adult flu vaccine.

Symptoms of the flu and COVID-19 can be similar and it may be hard to diagnose them simply based on symptoms alone. Testing is the best way to confirm a diagnosis so contact your healthcare provider if you are experiencing symptoms.

To safely get a flu vaccine, practice every day preventative actions and ask your doctor or pharmacist if they are following the CDC's vaccination pandemic guidance. Any vaccination location that is following this guidance should be a safe place for you to get the flu vaccine.

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