

# EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

## American Nurses Association Launches *Everyone Deserves A Shot at Fighting the Flu*

**A** new survey supported by the American Nurses Association (ANA) reveals 75 percent of polled registered nurses are extremely or very concerned about an outbreak of influenza in their workplace, and an even higher percentage are concerned about their patients becoming infected with the disease. In response, ANA has launched the "Everyone Deserves A Shot at Fighting the Flu" campaign to educate and encourage nurses and all health care workers with direct patient contact to get vaccinated against influenza for this coming season.

### ANA Survey Flu Facts Findings

- Nearly all registered nurses surveyed (97 percent) agree that one health care worker infected with influenza puts all patients and co-workers at risk in that setting.
- 95 percent of polled nurses agree that all health care workers should get vaccinated against influenza each year.
- 95 percent of polled nurses agree influenza vaccination is critical in reducing the risk of potential influenza epidemics.
- Only 5 percent of nurses polled believe all of their co-workers received an influenza vaccination last year.
- More than half of nurses polled consider themselves extremely or very susceptible to influenza this coming season.
- Nurses polled are cognizant of the complications that may arise as the result of influenza. However, many (77 percent) nurses polled who are aware



ANA President  
Barbara A. Blakeney

### A Message from ANA President Barbara A. Blakeney, MS, RN

"We hope this campaign will encourage nurses - and all health care workers - to get vaccinated this season and remind them of their responsibility to keep themselves healthy, especially given their direct contact with patients who may be at high risk for complications of influenza. By receiving influenza vaccinations, nurses and other health care workers can help to reduce the risk of an institutional outbreak of influenza as well as passing on influenza in other health care settings, which can have serious implications, such as: putting patients at risk for infection, curtailing admissions, increasing health care costs, and affecting the number of staff sick days, which also can adversely affect patient care."



that influenza can be deadly underestimate the number of deaths that occur as a result of the disease each year, which is an average of 36,000.

### Dangers of the Flu

- Influenza and influenza related complications kill more than all other vaccine-preventable illnesses combined. Influenza affects five to 20 percent of the U.S. population each season.
- Between 1990 and 1999, approximately 36,000 people died in the United States each year from complications of influenza infection; more than 90 percent of these deaths occurred in persons 65 years of age and older.
- Influenza outbreaks are associated with substantial direct and indirect costs.
- Recent estimates put the cost of influenza epidemics to the economy

at \$71 - \$167 billion per year.

- A 2001 report documented an outbreak in a 12-bed, single-room transplant unit where it was determined that health care workers were the likely source of transmission.
- An outbreak in a tertiary neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in 2000 affected 19 infants, one of whom died. Only 15 percent of staff in the facility had been immunized. In addition, no mothers of the infants had influenza-like symptoms.

### How You Can Help

Remember, vaccination is the primary method for preventing influenza and its severe complications. Ask your administrators about making flu immunizations convenient and accessible to all employees working with patients at your workplace.