“No One Has Time for Flu” Campaign Encourages Vaccination Amid COVID-19

A flu shot can save lives and conserve medical resources for those fighting the coronavirus.

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Nearly 45 million Americans get sick with the flu each year, and as many as 810,000 are hospitalized due to the virus. Now, a new ad campaign is urging Americans to get vaccinated against the flu, especially amid the nation’s ongoing coronavirus epidemic.

“No One Has Time for Flu” is a joint initiative by the Ad Council, the American Medical Association (AMA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the CDC Foundation, according to a recent press release.

The goal is to motivate more people to get the flu vaccine in order to protect themselves and their families as well as to conserve medical resources for COVID-19 patients. As AMA president Susan R. Bailey, MD, notes, a bad flu season during the COVID-19 epidemic in the United States “could place added burden on medical resources.”

“I urge the American public to embrace flu vaccination to help protect themselves, their families and their communities,” said CDC director Robert Redfield, MD. “Simply put, [the] flu vaccine can save lives.”

Redfield added that the campaign will focus its efforts on communities of color, which are disproportionately affected by serious flu illness and experience disparities in flu vaccination coverage.

According to the CDC, Hispanics and Blacks had the lowest flu vaccination coverage during the 2019 to 2020 flu season, 38.3% and 41.2%, respectively. Additional data showed that Black Americans had the highest flu hospitalization rates (68 per 100,000 persons) compared with Hispanic Americans (44 per 100,000) and white Americans (38 per 100,000).

What’s more, a July 2020 survey by the Ad Council revealed that 40% of Black respondents and 39% of Latino respondents said they hadn’t decided whether they would be getting a flu vaccine this season.

"Although there are many factors that can contribute to hesitation about getting a flu vaccine, our research revealed that a key barrier is that many people don't see a need for it," said Lisa Sherman, Ad Council president and CEO. But according to Sherman, the new campaign will change that mindset and show the importance of getting vaccinated.

"No One Has Time for Flu" will run during the 2020 to 2021 flu season in print and on television, radio and social media. For more information, visit getmyflushot.org.

For related coverage, read "What are the symptoms of COVID-19?" and "COVID-19 Causes Symptoms Besides Fever and Cough."

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