

## **Prevent the flu! – It's not just about you**

\*Coughing in background\*

*Influenza, a potentially serious disease, has arrived in Minnesota.*

*Is it too late to get a flu shot?*

*We sent the Commissioner of Health out to talk to Minnesotans about the flu and flu shots.*

Commissioner: So, have you gotten a flu shot this year?

-I have, I have. I get one every year. In fact, I have been getting them for years. I am a retired fireman, so, just dealing with all that, being out in the public, and dealing with sick people. I used to always get a flu shot every year...my wife and my sons also.

Commissioner: Ok, so you must, interacting with folks in the general public, come across some people who say, oh I don't want the flu shot for this, that or the other reason. What are the reasons that people don't get flu shots?

-You know, in fact, my old fire chief at the department, he was against it.

Commissioner: Why was that?

-You know, when we really pressed him for a reason, he felt that it didn't do any good anyway. That if you were going to get it you were going to get it.

Commissioner: He is a fatalist.

-Yeah, and I always thought that even if you were to contract the flu, it would be a lesser extent. You would bounce back on your feet better, even if you were to get it. So you know, from my standpoint, to me, it was foolish

Commissioner: So they also have this sign outside Coffman here, that says 'Do it for the Herd'. What do you think that means?

-Um, it means that when you have more people vaccinated, the overall likelihood of people who aren't vaccinated of getting the disease goes down significantly.

Commissioner: You have kids?

-I do. I happen to have two kids.

Commissioner: And do you think getting the flu shot for yourself will also protect them?

-I do, and they get the flu shot as well.

Commissioner: And did you know that the studies show that if kids get flu shots, it actually protects their grandparents?

-I did not.

Commissioner: Yeah, studies in Japan showed that the more that kids got vaccinated, the fewer elderly folks got flu.

-Well that is perfect because one of their grandparents won't get the flu shot. So I know they are providing a benefit to that grandparent.

Commissioner: So now some recent data have shown that flu shots aren't as effective as we thought they were. So we initially thought that they were 80-90 percent effective, but it looks they are only about 60 percent effective. Would that change your mind at all about flu shots?

-No, anything to help.

Commissioner: Yeah, because we don't have a cure for flu yet so if you can protect 60 percent of the time.

-Exactly.

-It's better than nothing.

Commissioner: Yeah, and if actually, 60 percent of your neighbors were protected and it didn't work for you, you are less likely to get it because it's not in your community.

-Because it's not spreading. Yes, exactly

Commissioner: Some people say, well it might be too late to get a flu shot. When do you think it is too late to get a flu shot?

-After you get the flu.

Commissioner: Perfect, perfect response. After you get the flu, it's too late. Yeah, but flu actually goes through February, sometimes March, so as long as you get it before flu comes it's a good thing. So it's never too late to get a flu shot.

-Alright

Commissioner: So what message should I give as a state health commissioner to people throughout the state in order to get them to get a flu shot?

-I would say just that, if you don't want to do it for yourself, do it for someone else.

-Do it for the person you love. Do it for the herd.

Commissioner: You guys are so altruistic. Thanks

*\*laughing\**

*It's not too late to get a flu shot!*

*Visit [www.mdhflu.com](http://www.mdhflu.com) to find a flu shot clinic near you.*