# News Release

## Influenza Vaccination Campaign Kicks Off October 18

**IQALUIT, Nunavut (October 18, 2011)** – The annual campaign to immunize Nunavummiut against influenza kicks-off today, and there is good news for children aged 2 to 4 years. There is a new, nasal flu vaccine that is available at health centres throughout the territory for children in this age group which means they may be able to receive a spray in the nose, not a needle in the arm.

“I am encouraging people to visit their local Health Centres for more information and to book their appointment,” said Minister of Health and Social Services, Tagak Curley. “We can protect our families and our communities from the flu with a simple flu shot.”

Dr. Geraldine Osborne, Nunavut Chief Medical Officer of Health, explains that the flu shot cannot give you the flu and prevents people from getting influenza; it helps stop the spread of the flu virus and it will help protect those at high risk, such as the very young and elderly.

“Being vaccinated helps decrease illness and death,” said Dr. Osborne. “Students are the biggest group to transmit the flu because they are in close contact with friends and classmates. If children are vaccinated, there is little chance of them bringing the flu home from school to their families.”

Last year only 25 per cent of Nunavummiut were vaccinated and it’s important that we increase that number this year, she added. The goal of the Department is to immunize at least 50 per cent of the population, including 70 per cent of children aged 2 to 4 years.

Influenza (flu) is contagious and is spread through coughing, sneezing or nasal fluids. Symptoms include fever, loss of appetite, sore muscles, sore throat and feeling tired. People usually get the flu between November and May.

This year’s campaign is being launched at Nunavut’s Legislative Assembly today, where the Hon. Tagak Curley, Minister of Health and Social Services, is receiving his flu vaccine. The flu vaccine program is available throughout the territory and is free to all Nunavummiut.

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