



Contact: Jennifer Corrigan
732-382-8898
732-742-7148 (Cell phone)

**CHILDHOOD INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION COALITION APPLAUDS EXPANDED INFLUENZA
VACCINE RECOMMENDATION FOR CHILDREN**

All children 6 months to 18 years of age recommended for annual vaccination

For Immediate Release

Atlanta— February 27, 2008 – The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases' *Childhood Influenza Immunization Coalition (CIIC)* is pleased to support today's vote by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to expand the influenza vaccine recommendation for children 6 months up to 18 years of age. This recommendation is to be implemented as soon as feasible and no later than the 2009/10 influenza season.

"Each season many children remain vulnerable to the consequences of not being vaccinated against influenza," said Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS, *CIIC* Chair, 17th Surgeon General of the United States (2002-2006), President of Canyon Ranch Institute and Distinguished Professor of Public Health, The University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health. "We hope this expanded vaccination recommendation will strongly encourage Americans to get an annual influenza vaccination as soon as vaccine becomes available in their communities. This will help in reducing the number of childhood hospitalizations and deaths from influenza each season."

Influenza is a serious and potentially deadly disease that spreads very easily. Anyone can get influenza, but rates of infection are highest among children. Currently, the recommendation calls for annual vaccination of children 6 months up to 5 years of age. Vaccination is especially beneficial to both children and adults with certain chronic medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease and compromised immune systems. Not only are children at risk for influenza when unvaccinated, but infected children often transmit influenza to other vulnerable populations, such as grandparents and other caregivers age 50 and over. An expanded vaccination recommendation means greater protection for children and for the community at large.

"The *Coalition* welcomes ACIP's recommendation as we continue to educate the health care community and the general public about the severity of influenza," said Carol J. Baker, M.D., FAAP, FIDSA, *CIIC* Moderator, NFID President and Professor of Pediatrics, Molecular Virology and Microbiology, Baylor College of Medicine. "Influenza is very serious, but it is vaccine-preventable. Annual vaccination of children of all ages is the best way to protect children *and* interrupt virus transmission to others."

A *Coalition* report available on www.PreventChildhoodInfluenza.org outlines key strategies for health care professionals to help ensure all recommended children are vaccinated: offering influenza vaccination at all medical visits and making use of the entire influenza season – vaccinating as soon as vaccine is available and continuing to vaccinate in January, February and beyond.

About the Childhood Influenza Immunization Coalition

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases' (NFID) *Childhood Influenza Immunization Coalition (CIIC)* was established to protect infants, children and adolescents from influenza by communicating with "one strong voice" the need to make influenza immunization a national health priority. *CIIC* members represent 25 of the nation's leading public health, medical, patient and parent groups committed to protecting children's health and encouraging wellness.

The *Childhood Influenza Immunization Coalition* initiatives are made possible through an unrestricted educational grant to NFID from sanofi pasteur.

For more information on *CII* or childhood influenza, please visit www.preventchildhoodinfluenza.org.

#