

### Businesses urged to protect staff against flu this winter

With more than three times as many people diagnosed with the flu so far this year across Queensland, Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN (PHN) is urging local businesses to follow its lead with a staff vaccination program.

PHN Senior Manager Robb Major said the organisation's initiative to best protect staff and their families from the virus had resulted in more than 60 staff signing up, with most choosing to receive the four-strain influenza jab at the Cotton Tree offices on Monday 13 May at 10am.

"This is the fifth year we've offered a staff flu vaccination morning at the PHN and it's not only a great way to protect vulnerable members of the community through herd immunity, but a sound business decision too," Mr Major said.

"Each year the flu leads to a significant loss of business productivity and quality family time, as staff require time off to help prevent the spread of infection throughout the workplace, and to recover.

"Vaccination represents the best chance to safeguard our business through the flu season, minimise staff sick days and protect the health and wellbeing of our community."

According to the latest data from Queensland Health, as at 9 May, 9,849 people across the state have already been clinically diagnosed with influenza in 2019, with 620 lab-confirmed cases on the Sunshine Coast alone – two and a half times more than the median rate of local infection over the past four years.

PHN General Practice Liaison Officer and Buderim GP, Dr Jon Harper said despite already high rates of infection in Queensland and across Australia, reasonably warm temperatures throughout the start of autumn meant the peak of flu season was yet to get under way.

"Now is an ideal time to get vaccinated; we are fortunate in Queensland to have relatively mild winters and yet, experience has taught us that this does not protect us from flu," Dr Harper said.

"Pregnant women, older people and those with chronic illness and compromised immune systems are hit hardest by the virus.

"Immunisation is the safest, most effective method we have for preventing the spread of influenza in our community.

"The flu vaccination is recommended for all Australians from six months of age and by vaccinating you'll be protecting yourself, and those around you."

The flu vaccine is available for purchase in Queensland from a doctor or approved immunisation provider, including pharmacies and some organisations with endorsed nurse immunisers who conduct immunisation programs for the public and private sector, like the one engaged by PHN.

Under the National Immunisation Program, flu vaccinations are made available free of charge for people who face a high risk from influenza and its complications.

"You should see your local GP to find out if you are eligible for a free vaccine," Dr Harper said.

Influenza is a highly contagious, droplet-borne virus causing a range of symptoms including high fever, muscle and joint aches, extreme tiredness and weakness, coughing and headaches.

Influenza is much more serious than a common cold, and unlike a cold, influenza can result in serious health problems such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, hospitalisation or death.

For more information, visit: [www.ourphn.org.au/immunisation-program](http://www.ourphn.org.au/immunisation-program)

# MEDIA RELEASE

10 May 2019



## Media Opportunity Details

**WHEN:** Interviews available between 10.00am – 10.40am, Monday 13 May 2019.  
PHN staff will be getting their flu vaccinations from 10.00am.

**WHERE:** Philips Room, Ground Floor, Mayfield House, 29 The Esplanade, Maroochydore.

There will be plenty of opportunities for footage and photos.

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**For more information contact: Jasmin Midgley, Senior Media and Communications Officer,  
Central Queensland, Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast PHN on 5456 8100**