FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT
Kaiser Permanente Urges You to Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones from the Flu Today!

PASADENA, Calif., September 25, 2013 — Kaiser Permanente Southern California seasonal flu clinics will open region-wide this Saturday, September 28th and we’d like to remind our members that getting the flu vaccine is the most important step you can take to stay well and protect yourself and your loved ones against influenza.

“The flu is a highly contagious respiratory infection that can cause serious complications, even lead to death,” said Kalvin Yu, MD, regional coordinating chair, Department of Infectious Diseases, Southern California Permanente Medical Group. “While it can be serious even in people who are otherwise healthy, it can be especially dangerous for children, pregnant women and older adults. This is why we urge everyone 6 months of age and older to get a flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available in their area.”

Even though the flu season typically starts in the fall and peaks in January or February, flu activity varies each year. In August, the Kaiser Permanente West Los Angeles Medical Center successfully treated the first reported case of H1N1 influenza of the 2013-2014 flu season. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health used this case as an alert to the general public and other healthcare providers in California that this may mean an early start to the influenza season.

For years now, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has collaborated with Kaiser Permanente to monitor trends in influenza-related hospitalizations. Since Kaiser Permanente insures more than 6 million Californians statewide, influenza activity among Kaiser Permanente patients is thought to be generally representative of influenza activity for the entire state.

According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, each year about 20,000 children younger than 5 years old are hospitalized from flu-related complications, like pneumonia. In the 2012-2013 flu season, a total of 161 influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported.

This year's annual flu shot will offer protection against the H1N1 flu virus, in addition to other influenza viruses that are expected to be in circulation this season.

“In addition to getting the flu vaccine, we should also take everyday steps to keep ourselves healthy,” said Gale Ivie, MPH, Kaiser Permanente Southern California, regional coordinator, flu campaign. “That includes washing your hands often and avoid touching your face. Also, be sure to cough or sneeze into your elbow, eat healthy, exercise regularly, and get plenty of rest.”

Since it can take up to two weeks for your body to develop immunity, it is important to vaccinate as early in the season as possible. Early vaccination will provide protection throughout the influenza season and into the spring.

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In addition to the opening of all walk-in clinics region-wide, several Kaiser Permanente Southern California facilities will hold drive-through flu shot clinics. These include:

**Diamond Bar Medical Offices**, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 1336 Bridgegate Dr., Diamond Bar, CA 91765

**Bellflower Medical Offices**, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 9400 E. Rosecrans Ave., Bellflower, CA 90706

**Palmdale Medical Offices**, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 4502 E. Ave. S, Palmdale, CA 93552

**Normandie North Medical Offices**, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., 25965 S. Normandie Ave., Harbor City, CA 90710

**Carson Medical Offices**, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., 18600 S. Figueroa St., Gardena, CA 90248

**Playa Vista Medical Offices**, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., 5620 Mesmer Ave., Culver City, CA 90230

**Lancaster Medical Offices**, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 43112 15th St. West, Lancaster, CA 93534

**Ontario Vineyard Medical Offices**, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., 2295 S. Vineyard Ave., Ontario, CA 91761

For a complete list of clinic locations and times, and for more information about preventing or treating the flu, visit [www.kp.org/flu](http://www.kp.org/flu).

**About Kaiser Permanente Southern California**
Kaiser Permanente is committed to helping shape the future of health care. We are recognized as one of America’s leading health care providers and not-for-profit health plans. Founded in 1945, our mission is to provide high quality, affordable health care services to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We currently serve more than 3.6 million members in Southern California. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal physicians, specialists and team of caregivers. Our expert and caring medical teams are empowered and supported by industry-leading technology advances and tools for health promotion, disease prevention, state-of-the-art care delivery and world-class chronic disease management. Kaiser Permanente is dedicated to care innovations, clinical research, health education and the support of community health. For more information, go to: [www.share.kp.org](http://www.share.kp.org).

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