

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Kaiser Permanente Southern California to Open all Flu Clinics on Sept. 22**

*Will Increase Member Access and Opportunity for No-Cost Flu Vaccinations; Will Campaign to Eliminate Flu Myths*

**PASADENA**, Calif., Sept. 20, 2018 — [Kaiser Permanente](#) will open all [seasonal flu clinics](#) throughout Southern California on Saturday, Sept. 22 and it urges all members to get no-cost vaccinations early. To provide more convenient access to the influenza (flu) vaccine, Kaiser Permanente will offer members [additional vaccination locations](#) beyond their regular physicians' offices, including drive-up flu clinics, pharmacies and walk-in flu clinics.

The most effective primary prevention against contracting the seasonal flu is to get vaccinated every year – and early. While vaccine effectiveness can vary from year to year, recent [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) studies](#) show that flu vaccination reduces the risk of flu illness between 40 and 60 percent when vaccines are well-matched against the circulating influenza strains.

There are numerous misconceptions and myths about seasonal flu and flu vaccines that prevent individuals from getting their flu shot. These harmful myths also cause significant disparities in flu vaccination by race, of particular focus - the African American and Latino communities.

According to the CDC, African Americans and Hispanics/ Latinos are disparate populations that experience disproportionately higher rates of chronic health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes and heart diseases, as well as extreme obesity which are all conditions that place them at higher risk for severe influenza complications. These groups are more often under-vaccinated.

“Unfortunately, many people choose not to get their annual influenza vaccine because of myths they believe about the disease or the vaccine. One popular myth is that getting the flu shot will actually give you flu. It’s simply not true,” said [Margaret Khoury, MD](#), pediatric infectious disease specialist and regional lead of the Kaiser Permanente Southern California Flu Vaccination Program. “Contrary to that myth, not getting the vaccine makes individuals especially vulnerable to catching the flu. As health professionals we are concerned that there are myths prevalent in the African American and Latino communities, so we work closely with our community partners to inform and educate, and at some locations offer free flu shots directly to the community. We strongly encourage all to get their flu shot and get it early, preferably before the end of October.”

Getting vaccinated can reduce flu-related illnesses, doctor’s visits, missed school and work due to flu. Influenza vaccination in high-risk individuals has also been linked to favorable health outcomes, including fewer flu-related hospitalizations and death. High-risk individuals include children, elderly, immuno-compromised individuals and those with severe chronic conditions.

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**

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, Kaiser Permanente has a mission to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We currently serve more than 12.2 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal Permanente Medical Group 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.kp.org/share](http://www.kp.org/share).