



## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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### **Stanislaus County Health Services Agency Conducts Pandemic Flu Preparedness Exercise**

STANISLAUS COUNTY –The Stanislaus County Health Services Agency is set to exercise an important component of its Pandemic Flu Response Plan, on Tuesday, October 16 from 2 – 6 p.m., when over 2,000 flu shots will be given to the general public for free, as part of the exercise. Pandemic Flu and other potential pandemic scenarios are increasing concerns for communities around the world. This is no different in Stanislaus County.

“During a potential pandemic flu outbreak, mass vaccination clinics are a key step toward protecting our community and saving lives,” said Dr. John Walker, Stanislaus County Public Health Officer. “The best way to be prepared is to have well developed plans that have been tested at least once before they are truly needed.”

This mass vaccination exercise is just one of the many steps being taken by the Health Services Agency to become better prepared to respond to all types of public health emergencies. This exercise will focus primarily on pandemic flu response.

Taking the lessons learned from outbreaks in the past, communities around the world are developing and exercising plans to respond to a pandemic flu and other public health disasters. The HSA Emergency Preparedness Program, funded by state and federal grants, is doing just that. This event is one of a number of community exercises that include several local agencies and community partners. In addition to the Health Services Agency, organizations that will be participating in the exercise on Tuesday include the Stanislaus County Office of Emergency Services, Modesto Police Department, American Red Cross, Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Memorial Medical Center, Doctors Medical Center, and Oak Valley Hospital.

“History has shown that successful emergency response efforts are grounded in effective collaboration among responding entities,” said Nancy Fisher, Assistant Director of HSA Public Health Services, and Incident Commander for the mass vaccination exercise. “An event like this provides us with the opportunity to exercise both the individual roles that our various agencies would fill in times of disaster and emergency response, and the coordination of those roles to better understand how we all fit together before a crisis actually hits.”

The experience gained and effective partnerships built through emergency preparedness exercises like this mass vaccination exercise, will help to ensure that Stanislaus County will be well-prepared to protect the public’s health when the next crisis hits.

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