



February 2013

# Influenza News



The National Influenza Vaccination Disparities Partnership (NIVDP) is a national multi-sector campaign, spearheaded by local influential partners who work to increase flu vaccination among underserved populations. The partnership and this newsletter are supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## PARTNERS READILY RESPOND TO PROTECT THOSE AT HIGH-RISK

NIVDP members continue to organize local flu clinics to vaccinate those at higher risk of severe flu-related health complications. Since September 2012, nearly 1,000 people have been vaccinated at flu clinics coordinated by partners. High risk individuals include pregnant women, adults 65 years and older, young children under 5 and especially those under 2 years old, and people with chronic medical conditions. The flu also can make chronic health problems worse, resulting in hospitalization and sometimes even death.

**REMINDER: Take the online CDC influenza pledge.**

### SPOTLIGHT ON PARTNERS

#### VIDA SENIOR CENTER HOSTS EVENT FOR GRANDPARENTS

NIVDP partner Vida Senior Center in Washington, DC, hosts a special influenza vaccination promotion event for their *Abuelitos* (grandparents) Program. Vida Senior Center was founded in 1969 with a mission to maintain the quality of life of Latino seniors in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. "Protecting our elders has to be a priority in our society," said Angel Luis Irene, Executive Director of Vida, "and flu vaccinations are an important part of that responsibility." According to the CDC, seasonal influenza tends to take a heavy toll on seniors, particularly when H3N2 is the predominant strain, which is the case for this season. Last month the CDC reported that 90 percent of flu-related deaths and as many as 60 percent of flu-related hospitalizations occur among people 65 and older. (Source: CDC, 2013)



*Abuelito* is vaccinated against the flu at Vida Senior Center, Washington, DC

#### SISTERS UNITED REACHES OUT TO PREGNANT WOMEN IN ARKANSAS

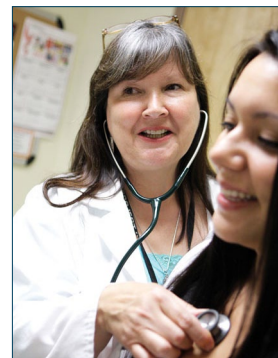
Sisters United joins NIVDP to promote flu vaccinations among pregnant women. Sisters United is a Little Rock community-based initiative driven by graduate chapters of sororities, including Alpha Kappa Alpha, Delta Sigma Theta, Zeta Phi Beta and Sigma Gamma Rho. According to Michelle R. Smith, PhD, Director of the Office of Minority Health, Arkansas Department of Health (DOH), "We tend to trust people we know in our communities. When Sisters United members go out to talk to young women in their communities, the influenza vaccination message will spread." Sisters United can potentially mobilize 31 chapters and more than 60 sorority members throughout the state of Arkansas for the 2013-2014 flu season.



Michelle R. Smith, PhD  
Director of Arkansas DOH,  
Office of Minority Health

#### NATIVE HEALTH CLINIC ENCOURAGES PATIENTS TO GET VACCINATED

American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) are at high risk of flu complications, reports CDC. "This is cause for concern for our community," shares Vinetta MacPherson, Medical Director of NATIVE Health, a partner in Spokane, Washington. NATIVE Health sponsored a flu vaccination clinic and luncheon for patients during NIVW. "AI/AN populations experience disproportionately higher rates of asthma, diabetes, heart diseases, cancer and renal disease. I really encourage patients with chronic diseases to get vaccinated against the flu," says Ms. MacPherson. One of MacPherson's patients, an unvaccinated child with asthma, recently caught the flu and suffered significant respiratory distress. "I tell them, 'You're not just protecting yourself. You're protecting family. You're protecting elders. You're protecting your community.'"



Vinetta MacPherson, Medical Director  
of NATIVE Health  
Spokane, Washington

**COMING SOON: *Protect the Circle of Life* widget for American Indians/Alaska Natives**

**Share your ideas, photos, and events with us. We will feature them in upcoming issues of Influenza News.**

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