



A New Day. A New Vision for the Valley.

*Contact: Mary O'Neil
For immediate release*

*Director of Public Relations and Marketing
mary.oneil@merrimackvalleyhospital.com*

Merrimack Valley Hospital Sets Date for Flu Shot Clinic

Haverhill, MA - Oct. 8, 2008 - Merrimack Valley Hospital will offer a flu shot clinic on Nov. 24 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the hospital Atrium located on the first floor. The clinic is open to anyone 18 or older in need of a flu shot. Individuals with Medicare should bring their health insurance card for billing purposes. The cost for those paying out-of-pocket will be \$30. For more information please call Susan Wald-Thomas at 978 521-8625.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people get their flu vaccine as soon as the vaccine becomes available in their community. Vaccination before December is best since the timing ensures that protective antibodies are in place before flu activity is typically at its highest.

The flu shot is an inactivated vaccine that contains killed virus given with a needle, usually in the arm. Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body and the antibodies provide protection against influenza virus infection.

The flu shot is approved for people six months of age or older, including healthy people as well as those with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease.

"Flu vaccination is important because it protects not only us, but our families and friends. We can transmit the flu even before we feel sick or have symptoms," said Susan Wald-Thomas, ANP, Nurse Practitioner, Employee Health. "But hand washing is still important because it takes up to two weeks to develop immunity after receiving the flu shot and immunization does not protect you from every strain of flu virus out there."

Influenza is a serious disease that people of any age can get. In an average year the flu causes 36,000 deaths, mostly among those 65 and older. Each year there are more than 200,000 hospitalizations caused by the flu.

Flu season in the United States is usually November through April. The annual flu vaccine is the best way to reduce your chance of getting the flu, and lessen the chance that you will transmit to others.

About Merrimack Valley Hospital:

Merrimack Valley Hospital maintains 108 acute care bed and 17 adult behavioral medicine beds; all are private rooms. The hospital's clinical strengths include a 24-hour emergency department; orthopedic, endoscopic and general surgery; adult behavioral medicine care with a focus on geriatric issues. MVH also provides a wide range of outpatient services, such as surgical day care; x-rays; MRI exams; PET-Scans; 64-Slice CT Scans; digital mammography; bone density testing; dysphasia testing; nuclear medicine; and physical therapy.

The hospital's awards for excellence include the Excellence Through Insight Award, 2008 (HealthStream Research); Best in Value Hospitals, 2008 (Data Advantage); #1 Nursing Team in New England Award, 2003 (Advance for Nursing Magazine); National Quality Leader Award for Pneumonia Care, 2006 (CareScience Select Practice); High Reliability Cardiac Care Award, 2006 (MassPRO); Top 100 Best Acute Care Hospital Award, 2004 (Total Benchmark Solutions); and Top Ranked Community Value Provider Award, 2007 (Cleverley & Associates). An affiliate of Essent Healthcare, Inc., the hospital serves Merrimack Valley and southern New Hampshire. More information can be found at www.merrimackvalleyhospital.com.

###