BlueCross BlueShield
of Alabama

Media Release	**Contact: Sophie Martin**
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Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama Strongly Encourages Alabamians to Get a Flu Shot

BIRMINGHAM, AL – Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama cares about the health and safety of our members and all Alabamians. Because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, reducing the spread of respiratory illnesses, like the flu, is vital. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone six months and older get a flu vaccination in September or October, but getting vaccinated anytime during the flu season can provide protection. Flu vaccines will not prevent COVID-19, but they can reduce flu illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths. The CDC also says **it is safe for the flu and COVID vaccines to be given at the same time.**

According to the CDC, viruses circulate at higher levels in the United States during flu season. One person with the flu can infect other people one day before any symptoms develop, and up to approximately seven days after a person becomes sick. The virus can spread to others up to six feet away, mainly by droplets expelled into the air when people cough, sneeze or talk. An annual flu vaccine is the best way to reduce the chances of getting the flu and spreading it to others. When more people get vaccinated, less flu spreads throughout the community.

The CDC also reports all Americans receiving a flu vaccine could significantly reduce healthcare costs. Recent studies show annual direct flu costs, such as hospital stays, medications and doctor visits for adults, are an estimated $10.4 billion. The flu causes U.S. employees to miss approximately 17 million workdays at an estimated $7 billion a year in sick days and lost productivity. In 2019-2020, the flu vaccine prevented more than 6,300 deaths.

To prevent the flu:
- Get vaccinated
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Wash your hands
- Stay home when you're sick
- Clean and disinfect

To learn more on flu prevention talk to your physician or go to cdc.gov/flu.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama has insured Alabamians for over 84 years. Blue Cross offers coverage plans to corporations, individuals and the senior market. For more information about Blue Cross, visit AlabamaBlue.com. Connect with us on Facebook, check out our videos on YouTube and follow us on Twitter and Instagram for more up-to-date information.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

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