

## Survey Reveals Most Americans Underestimate Severity of Influenza, Benefits of Vaccination

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MELVILLE, N.Y.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 6, 2002--While federal and state public health agencies are urging people of all ages to receive influenza vaccinations this season, a new national survey reveals that most Americans still underrate the seriousness of the flu and do not recognize the important health benefits that the vaccine can provide.

The survey found that almost nine in 10 Americans recognize that influenza can be fatal for the elderly and the infirm, however, most don't realize the significant dangers that flu can hold for the young and healthy. As a result, only one-third currently have been or plan to be vaccinated. The poll was conducted on behalf of Henry Schein, Inc. (Nasdaq: HSIC), one of the nation's leading distributors of influenza vaccine and the first to ship vaccine to physicians across the United States for the 2002-2003 flu season.

"Contrary to popular belief, influenza doesn't discriminate between the young, the old, the sick, and the healthy," said Janet McElhaney, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine and Director of Research at the Glennan Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology, Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, Virginia, and a consultant to Henry Schein. "It is a serious disease that can endanger all age groups, placing anyone who's infected at increased risk of severe complications, hospitalization or death. No one, not even young, healthy adults, should discount the importance of being vaccinated."

### Underestimating the Severity of Influenza

The survey found that Americans underestimate how deadly influenza is each year, and not just for older people: More than half of people surveyed (54 percent) were unaware that influenza kills as many people each year in the United States as HIV. According to the August 2002 issue of *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, both diseases claim, on average, 20,000 Americans per year.

Other reasons for avoiding vaccination break down along age lines. More than twice as many people age 55 and older are likely to receive a flu vaccination than younger people (55 percent vs. 27 percent), and those 65 and older are significantly more likely to be vaccinated to maintain their overall health (70 percent vs. 42 percent). One in four Americans say they are not vaccinated because it is not part of their personal health regimen, and another fourth of those surveyed (24 percent) say vaccination is not convenient or doesn't fit in their schedules.

"Many healthy, younger people are not vaccinated because they are fearful of contracting the flu, or because they think they are not at risk of becoming infected," said Dr. McElhaney. "We must let patients and physicians know that a flu vaccine will not cause the flu, and that the benefits of being vaccinated far outweigh the reasons not to be."

### Better late than never

Among those who have received or plan on receiving a flu vaccination this season, 84 percent have targeted October and November as months to be vaccinated. In subsequent months, the number of people drops significantly (five percent total from December to March). However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines state that vaccination in December, or even later in the flu season, is still beneficial.

"While the CDC urges people in high-risk groups, such as those over age 65, to be vaccinated now, receiving the vaccine later in the season is still effective for everyone else," said Dr. McElhaney. "This year, there is more flu vaccine available compared to last year. This will enable more healthy adults to be vaccinated later in the season."

"Henry Schein is committed to meeting demand from its healthcare customers for influenza vaccine," said Michael Racioppi, RPh, President, Medical Group, Henry Schein. "As a partner in helping our customers protect the public's health, we have secured an increased supply of flu vaccine this season to ensure that healthcare professionals have ample supply for their patients."

### About the survey

In October 2002, Opinion Research Corporation (ORC), on behalf of Henry Schein, Inc., conducted a national telephone survey of 1,017 Americans ages 18 and older in regards to their perception of influenza.

For more information on the 2002-2003 supply and to place an order, physicians are encouraged to call (800) 772-4346 to speak with a Henry Schein representative. Henry Schein has flu vaccine available for immediate shipment. Orders also can be placed through the Company's Web site, [www.henryschein.com](http://www.henryschein.com). To review the CDC recommendations, please see [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

### About Henry Schein, Inc.

Henry Schein, Inc. is the largest provider of healthcare products and services to office-based practitioners in the combined North American and European market. Recognized for its excellent customer service and low prices, Henry Schein serves more than 400,000 customers worldwide, including dental practices and laboratories, physician practices and veterinary clinics, as well as government and other institutions.

The Company operates its four business groups--Dental, Medical, International and Technology--through a centralized and automated distribution network, which provides customers in more than 125 countries with a comprehensive selection of over 80,000 national and Henry Schein private-brand products. Henry Schein also offers a wide range of innovative value-added practice solutions, including such leading practice management software systems as DENTRIX(R) and Easy Dental(R), for dental practices, and AVImark(R) for veterinary clinics, which are installed in over 44,000 practices; and Aruba(R), Henry Schein's electronic catalog and ordering system.

Headquartered in Melville, New York, Henry Schein employs over 6,700 people in 16 countries. The Company's 2001 sales reached a record \$2.6 billion. For more information, visit the Henry Schein Web site at [www.henryschein.com](http://www.henryschein.com).

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