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Connecticut Children's Flu Vaccine Program Achieves 99.975 Percent Compliance Five Employees Will Be Terminated As A Result of Not Getting Vaccinated

HARTFORD, Conn.— Connecticut Children's Medical Center's "Take Your Best Shot" flu campaign was an overwhelming success with nearly 2,900 employees, community physicians, contractors and volunteers receiving a flu vaccine during a three-week period. Of approximately 2,100 Connecticut Children's employees, only five failed to receive a flu vaccination before the hospital-imposed deadline, which will result in their termination.

A new policy at Connecticut Children's requires that all employees get a flu shot as a condition of employment. Employees who feel they could not get the shot because of medical or religious reasons were required to present written proof which was subject to an independent approval process. This policy follows the American Academy of Pediatrics 2010 recommendation for mandatory vaccination, which stated that "influenza coverage among health care providers remains unacceptably low."

"Everyone who works here should be proud of how we have protected the lives of those entrusted to our care," said Connecticut Children's Director of Infection Prevention Susan MacArthur, RN, CIC, CPHQ, MPH. "It is remarkable and very impressive how together, we moved our entire organization in the same direction to achieve this."

"Medical experts agree that immunization rates are a reflection of an organization's commitment to high-quality care and patient safety, said Connecticut Children's President and CEO Martin J. Gavin.

"Connecticut Children's, as the state's only academic medical center dedicated exclusively to children, must and will be a leader in this regard."

MacArthur added that Connecticut Children's has already been contacted by infection prevention directors from across the country seeking advice on how to implement a similar program at their own hospitals.

To help kick off the "Take Your Best Shot" campaign, approximately 1,272 Connecticut Children's employees received a flu vaccination as part of a 24-hour mass immunization drill that started at midnight on Sunday, Oct. 16. The findings from the drill will assist Connecticut Children's in improving its emergency operations plan, and to review distribution of the vaccine in the event of a real pandemic influenza or a bioterrorism event.