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## **“TEACH FLU A LESSON” MEANS STUDENTS GET THE POINT ABOUT THIS YEAR’S FLU**

### **Healthy Schools LLC, Marion County Public Schools and the Florida Department of Health in Marion County Will “Teach Flu a Lesson”**

**OCALA**—Marion County public school students are gearing up to fight influenza this school year. A new partnership between the Florida Department of Health in Marion County, Marion County Public Schools and Healthy Schools, LLC is called “Teach Flu a Lesson” and can immunize all students against the flu at no cost. Parents must provide signed consent forms for their children to receive the nasal mist immunization.

Healthy Schools’ nurses will administer nasal mist flu immunizations free to students with parental consent in every participating Marion County public school for two days only—December 1 and 2. Parents should be on the lookout for consent forms coming home with students beginning November 12 and return them immediately.

“An annual flu vaccination is the best way to prevent flu,” said Mike Napier, interim Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in Marion County. “This is especially important for our students during the holiday season, so they can be healthy and ready for school after the break.”

“Making sure our students stay healthy is a big priority for us,” said Superintendent of Schools George Tomy. “Healthy students mean healthy classrooms, and this immunization provides a great opportunity to stay healthy,” he added.

“Teach Flu a Lesson’ is a proven initiative that improves the health of students,” said Tony Boselli, Healthy Schools’ founder. “We are delighted to provide flu vaccine to students in Marion County this year.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends everyone aged six months and older receive an annual flu vaccine. Bringing flu vaccines into schools is a proven effective way to increase vaccination rates for children in Florida. Consider these findings:

- Each year in the U.S., an average of 20,000 children under the age of five are hospitalized for flu-related complications.
- Children with chronic health conditions such as asthma and diabetes have an extremely high risk of developing serious flu related complications.
- Children are more likely to get the flu or have flu-related complications because their Immune systems are still developing.
- Because of their diverse populations, schools tend to serve as incubators of influenza in each community.
- During the 2011-12 flu season, 26 child flu deaths were reported to CDC.

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