



MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Kansas Flu Vaccination of Health Care Workers Rate Nearly Doubles National Average

(Topeka, KS – March 4, 2011) – More than 76% of Kansas hospital workers received a flu vaccination during the 2009-2010 flu season, according to data from the Kansas Healthcare Collaborative. This rate nearly doubles the estimated national average of 40% reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Beginning in 2010, KHC launched an initiative to improve the state's hospital health care workers influenza immunization rates. In the second year of the project, 100% of hospitals in the state voluntarily reported their vaccination data. This is remarkable considering many states with public reporting mandates struggle to reach full participation. For example, the *Los Angeles Times* reported last year that the 2009-2010 influenza vaccination rate in California for the same period was 52.4%. In addition, the newspaper reported, "31% of hospitals in the state did not report their vaccination rate to health department despite a law requiring it."

The influenza vaccination of health care professionals is critical in eliminating the transmission and outbreaks of the virus. The CDC suggests health care workers have a specific role in the fight against influenza, with vaccination of workers linked to improved patient outcomes and reduced influenza infection.

"Annual influenza vaccination is vital to ensuring public health, especially in hospitals," said Kendra Tinsley, Executive Director of KHC. "We're proud of the results and believe this underscores the power of working together to achieve significant gains in the health of patients, hospital personnel and the public."

"With a major emphasis on health care quality in the United States, health care providers have the task of driving quality initiatives to improve the system, and a high rate of flu vaccinations among health care workers is a critical piece of the puzzle," said Jackie John, KHC Chair and Vice President, Great Plains Health Alliance.

Founded in 2008 by the Kansas Medical Society and Kansas Hospital Association, the mission of the Kansas Healthcare Collaborative is to transform health care through patient-centered initiatives that improve quality, safety and value. More information can be found at www.khconline.org.

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