



## PRESS RELEASE

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### State Director on Aging Says September Observances Stress the Importance of Healthy Aging

*September is Healthy Aging Month; September 23 is Falls Prevention Day*

**SPRINGFIELD** - September has a number of health awareness observances for older adults, including Healthy Aging Month, Adult Immunization Week (September 23 to 27), and Falls Prevention Day on September 23. All the observances have in common the fact they draw attention to the importance of good health. In observance, Illinois Department on Aging Director John K. Holton, Ph.D., is urging older adults to take steps to be healthy.

"September as Healthy Aging Month focuses on the positive aspects of growing older. It is a good time for older adults to assess how they are doing and take measures regarding their health. Those measures should include preventive efforts such as vaccinations and checkups," said Director Holton.

September 23rd, the first full day of fall, marks the seventh year of the campaign to raise awareness on how to prevent fall related injuries among older adults. According to campaign sponsor the National Council on Aging (NCOA), one in three Americans aged 65 and older falls each year often leading to injury. Falls are not a normal part of aging and most are preventable. Exercising, having vision checked, managing medications, and making the living environment safer are all steps to prevent a fall.

Another recommended protection for older adults is getting a seasonal flu vaccination. The flu season typically runs from October through May with the peak in January or February. Public health officials recommend a flu vaccination for everyone six months of age and older. The elderly and people with chronic health problems are much more likely to develop serious complications after influenza infection than younger, healthier people, so public health officials recommend getting vaccinated for influenza each year because the flu season changes and effectiveness of the previous year's vaccination decreases.

The flu vaccine is usually offered at local health departments, as well as health clinics and pharmacies. The cost of the flu vaccine may vary, but is covered by Medicaid, Medicare, and most private insurance.

For more information about influenza including where to get a season flu shot, log onto the Illinois Department of Public Health website at <http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu>.

For information about programs to assist older adults in Illinois and their caregivers, call the Department on Aging Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or (TTY, hearing impaired use) call 1-888-206-1327, or log on to the department website at: <http://www.illinois.gov/aging/>.

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