

## ***Flu Vaccination Campaign Talking Points***

### **TOPLINE MESSAGE**

To increase awareness about the importance of flu vaccination, Ad Council, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the American Medical Association (AMA) are partnering to launch a national flu vaccine campaign for the 2021-2022 flu season.

Flu causes tens of millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations, and tens of thousands of deaths in the United States during a regular flu season. At a time when new COVID-19 cases are increasing and, in some cases, overburdening our hospitals and healthcare personnel, it is important for everyone to get a flu vaccine to stay healthy and protect themselves, their families, and their communities.

### **Key Messages**

- **[why]** Getting a flu shot is one thing we all can do to help slow the spread of flu and keep our families and communities safe and healthy.
  - During a regular flu season, flu causes tens of millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and tens of thousands of deaths in the United States.
  - Right now, it's especially important to get your flu shot to protect yourself and your loved ones, to help make sure healthcare personnel and hospitals have the resources to continue to treat COVID-19 patients.
  - It is important to get your flu shot along with being fully vaccinated against COVID-19. You can get a flu vaccine and a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time.
- **[what]** *No Time for Flu*, developed by the Ad Council, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Medical Association will urge people across the U.S. to get their annual flu shot this flu season—to protect themselves, their loved ones and their communities. The campaign will be paired with #FluFOMO, a new platform to urge Americans to get the flu shot to avoid missing out on fun moments like spending time with family and friends.
- **[how]** The PSAs will run nationwide in English and Spanish across all platforms, in time and space donated by media, throughout this flu season. The creative and media strategy is designed to reach those who have not yet decided to get a flu shot this year, prioritizing Black and Hispanic audiences.
  - Due to longstanding health inequities that create undue burden and barriers, Black and Hispanic people are at higher risk of getting very sick from the flu, and also less likely to get flu vaccinations.
- **[CTA]** No one has time to get sick from the flu or miss out on special events with family and friends—especially this year. Get a flu shot for yourself, and for those around you. Learn more at [GetMyFluShot.org](http://GetMyFluShot.org).

### **Additional Campaign Background & “Tough Questions”**

- [WHAT IS THE CREATIVE STRATEGY?]

- The PSAs are an extension of last year's *No Time For Flu* campaign, created pro bono by advertising agency fluent360. The campaign reminds audiences that getting sick with flu doesn't just mean feeling ill—it can disrupt your life and your family's, especially when we are all juggling more responsibilities than ever.
- The campaign will be paired with #FluFOMO, a *new* platform to urge people to get a flu shot to avoid missing out on fun moments like spending time with family and friends.
- *#FluFOMO and No Time for Flu* direct audiences to GetMyFluShot.org for more information.

- [WILL IT WORK?]

- An Ad Council survey revealed that most people who have not yet decided to get their flu shot this year see the vaccine as something they generally don't do or think they need.
- By creating a national ad campaign, we can change that perception and create more urgency, reminding people that this year it's more important than ever to protect ourselves and our communities.
- According to research from the Ad Council, of those who were aware of the *No Time for Flu* campaign last year (during the 2020-2021 flu season), 71% of Black and Hispanic respondents reported already receiving a flu shot (compared to 48%/47% of those who were not aware of the campaign).

- [WHY THESE AUDIENCES?] *No Time for Flu* was developed to reach those individuals who have not yet decided to get their flu shot this year, including Black and Hispanic adults.

- An August 2021 survey by the Ad Council revealed that 30% of Black respondents and 33% of Hispanic respondents were undecided about getting a flu vaccine this year.
- Despite similar percentages of undecided Black, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic White respondents, our campaign continues to focus on Black and Hispanic individuals and communities due to longstanding healthcare inequities that create undue burden and barriers and place these populations at a higher risk of getting very sick from flu.
- Regardless of race, the survey revealed that many people who are not yet committed to getting their flu shot this season say it's because getting a flu shot is just something they generally don't do or think they need.
- Our goal this year is to change that perception. An annual flu shot is generally recommended for everyone six months or older, and this year it's more important than ever to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

- **[WHY PARTNER TOGETHER?]** The Ad Council, CDC and AMA have a rich history of working together on public health campaigns, bringing together CDC's and AMA's expertise and the Ad Council's ability to leverage the resources of the advertising and media industry to drive behavior change on a national scale.
  - Since launching in 2015, the Ad Council, CDC and AMA's *Diabetes Prevention* campaign has significantly increased awareness of prediabetes (from 50% to 66%) and over a million people have completed the online prediabetes risk test.
  - Most recently, the Ad Council, CDC, and AMA have partnered on a number of Coronavirus Response efforts, including promoting good hygiene, mask-wearing and vaccine education.
- **[WHAT DID IT COST?]** The Ad Council does not publicly disclose the budgets of campaigns. Organizations partnering with the Ad Council receive pro bono creative development and donated media placements nationwide, valued in the millions of dollars.
- **[IS AN AD CAMPAIGN ENOUGH? WHAT ELSE ARE CDC AND AMA DOING TO PROMOTE FLU VACCINES?]** The *No Time for Flu* campaign is one of many initiatives underway this flu season to encourage and enable more people to get their flu shot safely and conveniently. These efforts include:

**CDC:**

- Working to reduce immunization disparities among racial and ethnic minority groups through a new grant program called Partnering for Vaccine Equity, which is providing \$150 million in funding and support to national, state, local, and community-level partners working on increasing vaccine confidence and access to COVID-19 and flu vaccines for racial and ethnic minority groups.
- Conducting educational outreach, including digital advertising, social media, community partner engagement, and public relations to people who are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications.
- Raising awareness among health care providers and the public that flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time this season.

**AMA:**

- Every year, through various communication channels, the AMA encourages people six months and older to get a flu vaccine.
- The AMA is continuing these outreach efforts this year, including through social media resources on the AMA website, and other public relations activities.
- The AMA is also disseminating the latest vaccine guidance to physicians and ensuring they have resources needed to address patient questions and concerns.

- **[ISN'T THIS LATE IN THE FLU SEASON TO LAUNCH THIS CAMPAIGN?]**
  - CDC recommends vaccination by the end of October, ideally so October is a good time to get a flu shot. It's best for people to get vaccinated before there is flu activity in their local area, but CDC continues to recommend vaccination as long as the threat of flu remains. Flu season varies in timing. While flu most often peaks in February, significant flu activity can last into May..

- This campaign complements other outreach and education efforts that are underway by CDC, AMA, employers and healthcare professionals.
- [HOW HAS COVID IMPACTED PEOPLE'S LIKELINESS TO GET A FLU SHOT? WILL PEOPLE NOT LEAVE THE HOUSE TO GET THEIR FLU SHOTS?]
  - According to an Ad Council survey, most (64%) agreed that it's more important than ever this year to prevent flu so doctors and hospitals can concentrate on treating people with COVID-19.
  - *No Time for Flu* will reach millions of Americans across the country with this important message, urging them to get their flu shot to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their communities amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [CAN I GET A FLU SHOT AND THE COVID-19 VACCINE AT THE SAME TIME?]
  - Yes, you can get a flu shot at the same time as getting a COVID-19 vaccine.
  - It is important to get your recommended vaccines this fall and winter at the correct time.
  - CDC recommends flu vaccination and COVID-19 vaccination to protect against influenza viruses and SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
  - A flu shot helps protect you, your family, and your community from flu viruses, which can have potentially serious complications.
  - COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you, your family and your community from COVID-19, which can have potentially serious complications.
  - Vaccines are essential, and doctor's offices and pharmacies are taking steps to ensure vaccines can be provided safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Key Messages for Pitching Black & Hispanic Media**

- [WHY SHOULD BLACK & HISPANIC COMMUNITIES, SPECIFICALLY, CARE ABOUT GETTING A FLU SHOT?]
  - An August 2021 survey by the Ad Council revealed that 30% of Black respondents and 33% of Hispanic respondents were undecided about getting a flu vaccine this year, compared to 30% of non-Hispanic White respondents.
  - Despite similar percentages of undecided Black, Hispanic, and non-Hispanic White respondents, our campaign continues to focus on Black and Hispanic individuals and communities due to longstanding healthcare inequities that create undue burden and barriers and place these populations at a higher risk of getting very sick from flu, and also less likely to get flu vaccinations.
  - It's possible to get the flu and COVID-19 at the same time, so it's especially important for people at higher risk of serious flu complications—and their caregivers—to get their flu shot.
    - This includes people with underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, neurologic disorders, weakened immune systems, and diabetes, who also are more likely to have serious flu and COVID-19 outcomes.
    - Black and Hispanic people are disproportionately affected by these underlying conditions.
  - Black and Hispanic communities have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Getting your flu shot is one way to make sure that hospitals and

healthcare personnel in your community have the beds and resources available to continue to provide care for COVID-19 patients.

- [CDC data](#) show that Black and Hispanic people were more likely to experience higher rates of flu hospitalization compared to non-Hispanic white people.
  - Non-Hispanic Black people were 1.8 times as likely to be hospitalized with flu, compared to non-Hispanic white people.
  - Hispanic or Latino people were 1.2 times as likely to be hospitalized with flu, compared to non-Hispanic white people.
  - These data also showed disparities were greatest between the youngest age groups, with hospitalization, ICU and in-hospital mortality rates 1.3-4.4 times higher among racial and ethnic minorities aged 0-4 years compared with non-Hispanic White children.
    - Among non-Hispanic Black children, rates were 2.2-3.4 times higher.
    - Among Hispanic children, rates were 1.9-3.0 times higher.
- Additionally, Black and Hispanic workers are more likely to be in jobs that can't be done remotely. When you're an essential worker, getting your flu shot can protect you and others you come in contact with at your job.
  - Across the country, 43% of Black and Hispanic workers are employed in service or production jobs that for the most part cannot be done remotely, census data from 2018 shows. Only about one in four non-Hispanic White workers held such jobs.

### **Additional Key Flu Facts for the Campaign**

- **[WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A FLU SHOT?]** Flu shots are a safe and important way to protect yourself and your community from influenza.
  - If you get a flu shot, you are less likely to get the flu and to need to go to a doctor's office, urgent care or emergency room.
  - You are also less likely to be hospitalized or to die from the flu.
- **[WHO SHOULD GET A FLU SHOT AND WHEN?]** CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older (with rare exceptions) get a flu vaccine this season and every flu season – ideally by the end of October, if possible, before the flu is spreading widely.
- **[WHAT KIND OF FLU SHOT IS BEST?]** There are many options for flu vaccines, including a nasal spray vaccine. CDC does not recommend any one flu vaccine over another. The term “flu shot” is being used figuratively in this ad campaign to include all of the FDA licensed and CDC-recommended flu vaccines.
- **[IS IT POSSIBLE TO GET FLU AND COVID-19 AT THE SAME TIME?]** It is possible to get flu and COVID-19 at the same time, so it's especially important for people with higher risk of serious complications—and their caregivers—to get their flu shot.
  - This includes people with underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, neurologic disorders, weakened immune systems, and diabetes.
  - Due to longstanding healthcare inequities, Black and Hispanic people are disproportionately affected by these underlying conditions.

## **Top Media Tour Questions to Expect**

### **(AMA) Why is getting a flu shot especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

- Getting a flu shot is one thing we all can do to help slow the spread of flu and keep our families and communities safe and healthy.
- During a regular flu season, as many as 41 million people in the U.S. get sick with flu and as many as 710,000 are hospitalized with influenza.
- Getting your flu shot this year protects you, protects your family, and helps make sure healthcare personnel and hospitals in your community have the resources to continue to treat COVID-19 patients.

### **(CDC) Why is flu vaccination especially urgent for Black and Hispanic communities this year?**

- Due to longstanding health inequities, people in Black and Hispanic populations are at higher risk of getting very sick from flu—and also less likely to get flu vaccinations.
- An August 2021 survey by the Ad Council revealed that 30% of Black respondents and 33% of Hispanic respondents were undecided about getting a flu vaccine this year.
- It's also possible to get flu and COVID-19 at the same time, so it's especially important for people with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk of serious complications—and their caregivers—to get their flu shot. Due to longstanding health inequities, Black and Hispanic people are disproportionately affected by these underlying conditions.

### **(Either) Is it safe to get a flu shot right now? When should you get one, who should get one, and why?**

- An annual flu vaccine is generally recommended for everyone six months or older, and October is a great time to get one, before flu is spreading widely. CDC recommends people get vaccinated before the end of October, ideally, but vaccination is recommended through flu season, which can last into May.
- Vaccines are essential, and doctor's offices and pharmacies are taking steps to ensure vaccines can be provided safely during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Visit GetMyFluShot.org to learn more and find where to get a flu shot near you.