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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO VACCINATE - GET YOUR FLU VACCINE TODAY! *Stay Flu-Free This Holiday Season*

STOCKTON, CA (December 12, 2012) – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports current surveillance data indicates this year's influenza (flu) season is well underway and levels of influenza activity in the United States are continuing to increase across the country. CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older should receive an annual seasonal flu vaccine as the single best way to protect against seasonal flu and its potential complications.

San Joaquin County Health Officer Dr. Karen Furst urges, "All those who have not done so already, should get their annual flu vaccination now; it is not too late to protect yourself and your family against influenza this year." It takes up to two weeks after vaccination for full immunity to take effect and winter holiday activities and gatherings are prime opportunities for flu viruses to spread. Flu activity usually climbs in January and peaks in February in the United States and can last as late as May.

Vaccination is especially important to protect those who are at high risk for developing serious flu complications if they get the flu. At-risk groups include: children under age five (5), adults 65 and older, people with a compromised immune system, pregnant women, morbidly obese people, residents of long term care facilities, and those with medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic illness.

Others who are urged to receive the flu vaccine to protect those around them include: health care workers; household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of people who are at high risk of complications (including children younger than 6 months of age who are too young to receive the flu vaccine).

In addition to getting vaccinated, avoid spreading the flu virus by covering coughs and sneezes, washing your hands often and staying home when you are sick. Symptoms of the flu include: fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough and muscle aches. Complications can include pneumonia, ear and sinus infections and dehydration; the flu might also worsen other chronic conditions.

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Seasonal influenza vaccine is available through various sources in the community, including doctor's offices, neighborhood pharmacies, grocery stores, and at some work sites. To find immunization clinic sites that are convenient for you, log onto www.flu.gov. San Joaquin County Public Health Services provides flu vaccine during its regular immunization clinic hours, for people of all ages who do not have a regular source of medical care that provides influenza vaccine. The fee is \$15; however, no one will be denied services due to inability to pay. Please call (209) 468-3830 or visit www.sjcphs.org for clinic days and hours.

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Attachment: San Joaquin County Public Health Services Immunization Clinic Schedule