



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Partnership for Quality Care along with the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Department of Public Health and SEIU Local 721 Urge Health Care Workers and the Public to Get Flu Vaccinations

As flu season approaches, The Partnership for Quality Care joined the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Department of Public Health and healthcare workers represented by SEIU Local 721 to stress the importance of getting immunized against influenza.

Los Angeles – A joint press conference was held at the Harbor UCLA Medical Center today urging all health care workers and the public to get a flu vaccination to keep themselves, their patients, their colleagues and their families safe. The event featured Mark Ridley-Thomas, Los Angeles County Supervisor, 2nd District; Mitchell Katz, MD, Director, Department of Health Services; Jeffrey Gunzenhauser, MD, MPH, Health Officer, Department of Public Health; Patricia Castillo of SEIU Local 721; and Ken Zangwill, MD, Infection Prevention, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center.

The 2015-2016 flu vaccine is available nationwide and health care leaders at the event stressed the importance of getting immunized before the flu begins to spread widely, highlighting the safety and ease of doing so. “Taking a few minutes to get a flu shot can prevent unnecessary illness and death. As health care providers, we should all remember that by protecting ourselves, we can protect our patients,” said Director of Department of Health Services and PQC Board Member, Dr. Mitch Katz.

The event was opened by 2nd District Los Angeles County Supervisor, Mark Ridley-Thomas. “During the 2014-2015 flu season, Los Angeles County had several deaths associated with the flu – 54, according to the Department of Public Health,” he said. “The importance of getting a flu shot cannot be overstated.”

“As the flu season begins, we encourage everyone 6 months of age and older to get vaccinated,” said Jeffrey Gunzenhauser, MD, MPH, Interim Health Officer for Los Angeles County. “I call on all my colleagues who work in hospitals and long term care facilities – whether clinical providers, cafeteria workers, or volunteers, whoever has contact with patients – to get vaccinated.”

This was echoed by Patricia Castillo, Campaign Director for SEIU 721, “Getting immunized dramatically decreases your chances of contracting the flu, but so many people choose not to get a flu shot. Getting the shot is easy, safe and barely hurts at all. It’s free for our SEIU health care workers and low cost for the public. The time to get a shot is now, before the season hits its peak.”

About PQC

The Partnership for Quality Care is a national labor-management coalition committed to ensuring quality, affordable health care for everyone in America. It includes public, private, religious, teaching, and nonprofit hospitals nationwide and integrated health systems and the nation's largest healthcare union, SEIU, with more than 1 million nurses, doctors and health care workers. Our members care for more than 50 million patients annually. Please visit our website www.pqc-usa.org, and follow us on Twitter at @PQCnews.

About Public Health, LA County

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises nearly 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$900 million. To learn more about the LA County Department of Public Health and the work they do, visit PublicHealth.LACounty.gov, and follow Public Health on social media at twitter.com/LAPublicHealth, facebook.com/LAPublicHealth, and youtube.com/LAPublicHealth.

About SEIU Local 721

SEIU 721 represents the county and city employees across Southern California, including Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside counties and numerous cities in the region, as well as employees of special districts and publicly-funded non-profits such as health clinics. Members care for the sick, protect the quality of the drinking water, keep records in the courts, administer benefits for poor people, maintain the libraries, help run the jails, protect our communities' most vulnerable members, maintain the streets, work with parolees, groom and maintain the beaches, and provide many other services to keep counties and cities running.