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WellMed To Deliver Free Flu Shots For Seniors In Five Counties

**Shots Available At Clinics In Bexar, Atascosa, Comal, Guadalupe and Kendall
Counties; Mobile Clinic Also Taking Vaccines Into Neighborhoods**

San Antonio, TX – Nearly all seniors and other Medicare-eligible residents in the Greater San Antonio area won't have to pay for flu shots this season thanks to WellMed Charitable Foundation and WellMed Medical Group.

Did You Know?

Every year in the U.S., on average:

- **5% to 20% of the population gets the flu**
- **More than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications**
- **About 36,000 people die from flu (mostly ages 65 and older)**

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

WellMed, which serves 1 in 5 seniors in the Greater San Antonio area, is offering free flu shots to all Medicare-eligible residents in Bexar, Atascosa, Comal, Guadalupe and Kendall counties beginning **October 1 through December 31**, based on the available supply of influenza vaccines. For more information, call WellMed at **(888) 781-WELL (9355)**.

Seniors are the largest portion of the Medicare population, although people with disabilities also qualify for Medicare.

The free influenza vaccines, which normally cost \$25 to \$35 per shot, will be offered at WellMed clinics in San Antonio (Bexar County), Boerne (Kendall County), Bulverde (Comal County), New Braunfels (Comal County), McQueeney (Guadalupe County) and Pleasanton (Atascosa County). Flu shot clinics will be held once or twice a week. For a schedule of flu shot clinics, visit www.wellmedmedicalgroup.com.

The announcement continues a community health initiative that WellMed started last year, when it partnered with the City of San Antonio's Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health) to offer free flu vaccines across the Bexar County population through its non-profit arm, the WellMed Charitable Foundation.

This year's campaign, also is being sponsored by the WellMed Charitable Foundation, expands the initiative into four neighboring counties served by WellMed Medical Group, and is focused specifically on Medicare-eligible residents. WellMed Medical Group is donating use of its clinic staff to administer the flu shots.

WellMed also will offer free flu shots to Medicare-eligible residents throughout the five counties through **WellMed I: Healthcare On Wheels**, a state-of-the-art bus has been specially equipped to provide several free healthcare services, including health screenings and flu shots. WellMed flu clinics also will be set up at upcoming community health fairs.

A schedule of these neighborhood clinics will be announced later and will be posted on WellMed's website – www.wellmedmedicalgroup.com.

Possible flu complications

- Bacterial pneumonia
- Ear infections
- Sinus infections
- Dehydration
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions (congestive heart failure, asthma, diabetes, etc.)

Source: CDC

While nationally the supply of flu shots for purchase is expected to be plentiful this season, WellMed officials were concerned about the large population of high-risk residents who would not be able to afford the cost that some doctors, clinics and other retail outlets charge for flu vaccinations. Seniors make up most of the estimated 36,000 people who die from the flu every year in the United States.

This year's influenza vaccine is expected to be more effective than last year's since it will be made up of three new flu strains that were especially problematic across the Northern Hemisphere last season. The makeup of this year's vaccine was based upon recommendations made in February by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the World Health Organization.

WellMed owns 22 healthcare clinics in the Greater San Antonio area. In addition, 39 independent physicians' offices in the San Antonio area are affiliated with WellMed. Overall, WellMed serves more than 77,000 patients and insured members every year, mostly Medicare-eligible seniors.

WellMed Medical Management is a diversified healthcare company and insurance provider serving 77,000 patients and insured members, mostly Medicare-eligible seniors throughout Texas, along Florida's Treasure Coast and in the Las Cruces, New Mexico area. WellMed is an industry leader in medical risk management, highly effective disease management and chronic care programs, healthcare delivery services, and more.

WellMed is South Texas' largest physician-owned practice management company, specializing in senior health care since 1990. With 30 medical clinics in Texas and Florida, the mission of the healthcare company and insurance provider is to change the face of healthcare delivery for seniors.

For more information

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