PRESS RELEASE

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NHS clinical staff are keeping well through busiest time of year

The NHS and Public Health England launched a major campaign this month, encouraging people to stay well through the winter. One of the campaign’s central messages is encouraging key groups to get their seasonal flu vaccination – and NHS clinical staff are definitely one of those groups!

All the clinical workers in Mid Essex GP practices have been asked to get their jab. As they work on the front line of healthcare, they are more likely to be exposed to the flu virus, particularly during the winter when more people are infected. It is important they avoid infection themselves – most importantly, to protect vulnerable patients from a highly transmissible infection.

Clinicians protecting themselves from infection helps to safeguard the welfare of local people and their families. Figures published in respected medical journal The BMJ suggest as many as 25% of healthcare workers may become infected during a mild influenza season. That is a far higher figure than the general population.

Having the vaccination offers another big benefit, too. Carol Anderson, Director of Nursing and Quality at Mid Essex CCG, explains: “You aren’t just protecting yourself against flu, but setting an example to colleagues, peers and your patients, too. By having the seasonal vaccination, you are showing your commitment to providing high-quality, compassionate care, and how important the flu jab is for everyone.”

NHS colleagues in community services and at Broomfield Hospital are already promoting the vaccination to staff. There is a visiting vaccination service across wards and departments at the hospital, so people working there can all have a jab. More than 1,000 employees were vaccinated in a single week.

The flu vaccination cannot infect someone with flu, as it is not a “live vaccine”, but anyone who gets a mild reaction to the jab afterwards can use a cold flannel to relieve discomfort, and should drink fluids if they experience any slight feverishness.

The flu vaccination drive is part of the broader Stay Well This Winter campaign from the NHS, which you can find out about at www.nhs.uk/staywell. It is also linked from the CCG homepage at midessexccg.nhs.uk/.

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