

# Carewwrite

— Carewest's Newsletter for Staff, Residents, Volunteers and Friends —

## *Special Issue!*

Monday, October 16, 2000 marks the start of National Infection Control Week, and the kick-off for the:

## **Carewest Influenza Campaign 2000-2001**

*Vaccination is the single most effective way to prevent flu and complications from flu*

- Our annual campaign begins the week of Oct.16th at all Carewest sites
- The Flu Vaccine is free
- The Flu Vaccine is offered at ALL Sites, administered by RNs.
- The Flu vaccine is recommended for ALL employees of a healthcare facility



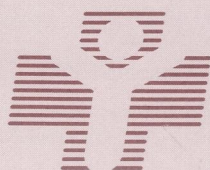
**Make 2000 your year to get shot!**

Carewest is once again offering prizes to staff for getting the flu shot this year. To qualify for the contest, you must first take it in the arm! Each site will have draws for the following prizes:

- ◆ A day off with pay!
- ◆ One month free parking (except for Nickle House).
- ◆ Dr. Aldridge is once again donating a \$100 cash prize for one lucky winner from all sites combined.



Remember, everybody is a winner when everyone participates in getting immunized against the flu!



**Carewest**

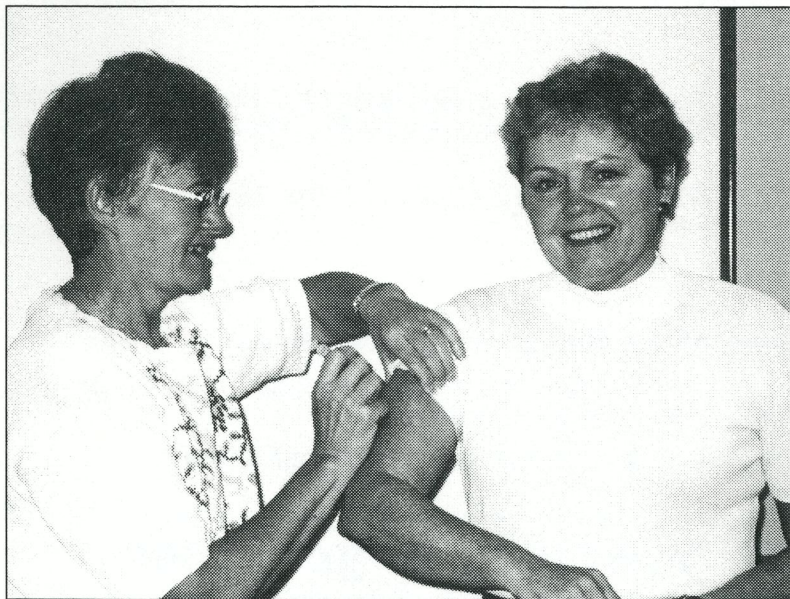
*Excellence and Leadership in Continuing Care*

October 13, 2000



## FLU FACTS

- ◆ The flu vaccination has been shown to prevent illness in 70% of healthy adults and children.
- ◆ For frail elderly people and those with chronic illnesses, the flu vaccination is 85% effective in preventing death from flu. (*Statistics Canada*) ***That is why it is so important to get a flu shot each year.***
- ◆ The annual flu vaccine is a combination of the top three *Influenza* strains expected to hit Canada this year.
- ◆ The vaccine does **NOT** cause influenza because it **DOES NOT** contain a live virus.
- ◆ Most people have little or no reaction other than the usual soreness at the injection site.
- ◆ Carewest Influenza Vaccination Policy encourages **ALL** staff and volunteers to take the annual flu vaccine.
- ◆ This policy works to decrease outbreaks in our care centres and to prevent flu from spreading between staff, volunteers, residents, and our families.



*Nora Kirkham, Executive Director, gets her flu shot from Margaret Bates, Program Leader, Carewest Cross Bow.*

*"I encourage each and every employee to get a flu shot. It is free and only takes a minute or two. But most importantly, it could save the life of an elderly resident or a person with a chronic illness."*

### Here is what the Carewest flu policy says:

During an influenza outbreak on a unit, immunized staff will continue to work unless they have flu symptoms. Immunized students and volunteers will be allowed to continue placement/work, as long as they are free of symptoms.

Non-immunized staff on the affected unit will not be permitted to work during an outbreak. They will have three choices regarding work schedules in the event of an influenza outbreak.

#### Employees:

- ◆ May make arrangements with their physicians to commence a 2-week prophylaxis (preventative therapy) protocol with Amantadine. After 72 hours following their last known exposure, they will be allowed to return to work.

- ◆ May make arrangements at the time of the outbreak to have the flu vaccine but will be unable to return to work until they have achieved their peak immunity at the end of 2 weeks. They may wish to take Amantadine in addition to the vaccination in order to return to work sooner, ie. 72 hours.

- ◆ Remain off work until the outbreak is declared over by the Infection Prevention and Control (IP&C) Coordinator.

*Note: To read the entire flu policy please contact the Administration Secretary at your site. Administrative Manual, Section: Human Resources AM-06-03-10.*



## Here's why you should get a flu shot ...

"During my teen years I had the flu yearly and generally had a poor immune system. My doctor suggested taking the flu vaccine when I was about 14 years old. I received the vaccination until age 18. Situations made it so that I did not have the flu vaccine for two years. Both of those years, at the end of January, I became very ill with the flu. I am a believer in the flu vaccine."

*Cherie Hnybide, Resident Assistant,  
Carewest Royal Park*

"As a person who suffers from a chronic lung condition, I have taken the flu shot for several years. In the last two years, I have not had the flu. In other years, while I may have had the flu, I was ill for a shorter period of time and not nearly as ill. I encourage everyone working at Carewest to get a flu shot -- not only for your own health but for your family's and our residents' health as well."

*Brenda Huband, Site Leader, Carewest  
Sarcee, Royal Park, Signal Pointe*

"Every year for the past twenty years, I have had the flu shot. I can honestly say that all but one year I never got the flu. The year I did get it, it was only a mild case. I strongly support the vaccine as it builds up your immune systems and if you do come in contact with the germ through a table mate, grandchildren, or friend, you're usually safe because you've been immunized. I'm all for my yearly flu shot and wouldn't want to go without it."

*Anola Appellhof, resident, Carewest  
Royal Park*

### What is the flu?

The flu is an infection caused by type A and type B influenza viruses. It is most common in the fall and winter. The flu is highly contagious; the virus usually enters the body through mucous membranes in the mouth, nose or eyes. When a person with the flu coughs or sneezes, the virus becomes airborne and can be inhaled by anyone nearby.

### How do I know if I have the flu?

The onset of flu often seems sudden: people describe feeling like they've 'been hit by a truck.' Common flu symptoms include sudden onset, fever and chills, cough, muscle and joint pain, headache, fatigue and weakness.



### Is the flu dangerous?

A bad case of the flu will probably send a healthy adult or child to bed for 3 to 5 days. People over the age of 65 years and those of all ages with chronic illnesses are more likely to become seriously ill with the flu.

### Can the flu be cured with antibiotics?

No. The flu is a viral infection that cannot be treated with antibiotics. However, your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic to treat some complications of the flu, such as pneumonia or bronchitis.

### What should I do if I get the flu?

Just like the commercials: "rest and drink plenty of fluids." A pain reliever may be taken for aches and fever. An antiviral medication may be prescribed if able to take it within 1 to 2 days of the time the first symptoms appear.

### Should I call my doctor if I think I have the flu?

If you feel seriously ill, you should always call a doctor. People over the age of 65 years and those with chronic health problems should always contact a doctor if they get the flu.

### Is there anything I can do to avoid getting the flu?

To prevent getting the flu, or to lessen the severity of the flu, you should get a flu shot each fall — particularly if you are over the age of 65 years or have a chronic health problem. There are also simple common sense things you can do to try to protect yourself from the flu:

- ◆ Keep your distance from people who have the flu, since the virus is spread by coughing or sneezing.
- ◆ Wash your hands frequently.
- ◆ Try to maintain a healthy lifestyle: follow a good diet, get enough sleep, keep stress levels low and drink lots of water.

*Adapted from "It's Never Been Easier to Attack the Flu," provided by Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd.*





## **A SUCCESSFUL UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN DEPENDS ON US ALL....**

Once again we're asking Carewest to give generously to the United Way Campaign 2000.

Last year's campaign was a tremendous success with donations totaling over \$21,000. This year we're counting on 100% staff participation, an increase in overall donations — with more funds directed to the Carewest Development Council.

Where does your United Way/Carewest donation go? Quite simply, toward making life more comfortable and pleasant for our residents. Here are just a few examples: catering dishes for special meals, art classes, lifts to make getting in and out of bed easier and safer, blanket warmers, patio furniture, pictures, Carewest buses and on and on....

Many thanks to our Campaign Coordinators at each of the sites, we all appreciate the extra effort you give. Now let's all pitch in and make 2000 the best United Way year ever!

*Nora Kirkham*  
Executive Director

### **Nora Kirkham 'KEEPS IN TOUCH'**

The next *Keeping in Touch* session is **Friday, October 20, 2000 at Carewest Dr. Vernon Fanning Centre, Conference Room #1, from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m.**

Please e-mail any questions in advance to 'Keeping in Touch', or drop them in the box provided at the front reception desk at Fanning.

### **IT'S HERE!**

The 1999/2000 Carewest Annual Review is hot off the press and coming your way soon! Copies will be available at all sites and on all units and departments. Staff, families, residents and volunteers are encouraged to pick up a copy. Let us know what you think!

*Carewest Communications*



Don't forget! The Carewest Christmas Gala 2000 takes place on November 17, 2000 at the Telus Convention Centre. Tickets are now available at your site reception desk. See you there!

## **Carewrite**

Carewrite is produced twice a month. We welcome submissions.

Please contact Debbie Hayman— Voice: 267-2992 Fax: 267-2968 Email: [debbie.hayman@crha-health.ab.ca](mailto:debbie.hayman@crha-health.ab.ca)

[www.carewest.org](http://www.carewest.org)