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PRESS RELEASE

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UMass rolls up sleeves for flu vaccine; more available

AMHERST, Mass – More than 2,200 people on the UMass Amherst campus are better protected against seasonal flu, thanks to University Health Services' (UHS) fall vaccination campaign. But, it's not too late for those who've put off receiving this important protection.

"In our area, flu typically peaks in late winter to early spring," said UHS public health nurse Ann Becker, R.N., who coordinates the annual flu immunization program. "There's still plenty of time to be vaccinated."

There are also plenty of reasons to do it – including the sobering fact that each year, 36,000 people in the United States die from influenza. This year, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have designated December 8 – 14 as National Influenza Vaccination Week. The event highlights the importance of flu vaccination and boosts awareness of vaccine availability during the early winter months.

While almost anyone who wants to protect against flu can get vaccinated, an annual immunization is particularly important for some people. This year, the CDC expanded its recommendations for annual vaccination to include children ages 6 months to 19 years old and people living in institutional settings such as college dormitories. Other groups include pregnant women; people 50 and older; those with chronic medical conditions; people who live with or care for someone at high risk; and healthcare workers.

UHS offers both injected and inhaled vaccinations. Members of the campus community who receive their primary care at UHS can call (413) 577-5101 for a fast, flexible vaccination appointment, or ask their provider for an immunization during an existing appointment.

UHS, UMass Amherst's fully accredited health center, serves students, faculty and staff. The center offers comprehensive care, referral and education services, with a special focus on the health needs and concerns of students. For more information, visit www.umass.edu/uhs, or call (413) 577-5000.