

Henry Schein First to Ship Influenza Vaccine to Physicians; At Least 17 Million Doses of Flu Vaccine Available for 2002-2003 Season

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MELVILLE, N.Y., Aug 1, 2002 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Henry Schein, Inc. (Nasdaq: HSIC), the largest provider of healthcare supplies to office-based practitioners in the combined North American and European markets, today said it began shipping Fluvirin influenza vaccine from UK-based PowderJect to customers, including office-based physicians, across the United States. The Company believes it is the first distributor to do so in the 2002-2003 influenza season.

Henry Schein is one of the leading distributors of vaccines, including the influenza vaccine, in the United States and plans to ship at least 17 million doses of influenza vaccine this season.

"It is extremely important that physicians receive influenza vaccine in their offices as soon as possible so they can begin vaccinating those who are 'high-risk' in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines," explained Janet McElhaney, M.D., director of the Glennan Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology, Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, Virginia and consultant to Henry Schein, Inc. "Physicians should already have begun scheduling patients for office visits, but now that they have the vaccine in hand, they should have the confidence to make sure all of their patients are scheduled for the entire season."

According to the CDC, patients at-risk for complications from influenza include those 65 years and older; those under 65 who have underlying chronic illnesses; children under nine who are receiving flu vaccine for the first time; children age 6-23 months; household contacts and care givers for those considered high risk; and health care workers. These individuals should seek out vaccination by a physician as soon as vaccine is available, preferably between September and November. Those who are not at-risk for complications from influenza, including healthy adults age 50-64 and those under 49 who want to reduce their risk for influenza, are encouraged to seek influenza vaccine in November and later.

According to Dr. McElhaney, many patients do not get vaccinated because they may not be correctly identified as "high-risk," including people who suffer from coronary artery disease, chronic obstructive lung disease like asthma, those who have been recently hospitalized or those who have had numerous visits to a physician's office. At the same time, there may be a perception that vaccination later in the season is not useful.

Referring to the 10 million flu vaccine doses that went unused last year, Dr. McElhaney went on to underscore the importance of responsible healthcare management: "The CDC has reported that influenza is the single most vaccine-preventable disease we know of. Patients and physicians need to work together to ensure this year's flu vaccine supply is used appropriately and in its entirety.

"Although 'high-risk' patients are encouraged to receive their vaccine between September and November, it is still clinically beneficial for these patients as well as everyone else, to receive the influenza vaccine through December and January, if they have not received it earlier. It has been recommended that physicians and patients alike recognize the clinical importance of late-season flu vaccination for those not at-risk and be more willing to administer and receive the vaccine later in the season -- after Thanksgiving and through January -- to the healthy population." It is also important for physicians to stress to all of their patients who are reluctant to receive the vaccine, that they cannot get the flu from the vaccine. Unlike in the past, injectable flu vaccine today does not contain the live virus.

Additional Supply Anticipated

Henry Schein is the primary distributor of influenza vaccine for UK-based manufacturer, PowderJect, and its subsidiary, Evans Vaccines. The company's vaccine, Fluvirin, has FDA approval for US distribution.

"At the beginning of last season, we made arrangements with PowderJect to ensure that additional flu vaccine supply would be available in the United States," explained Michael Racioppi, RPh, President, Medical Group, Henry Schein. "This year, thanks to PowderJect's manufacturing capabilities, we expect to receive about 15 percent more vaccine than last year, which hopefully will translate to more patients being vaccinated."

For more information on the 2002-2003 supply and to place an order, physicians are encouraged to call (800) 772-4346 to speak with a Henry Schein representative. Orders can also be placed through the Company's web site at www.henryschein.com. To review the CDC recommendations, please see www.cdc.gov.

About Henry Schein, Inc.

Recognized for its excellent customer service and low prices, Henry Schein serves more than 400,000 customers worldwide, including dental practices and laboratories, physician practices and veterinary clinics, as well as government and other institutions.

The Company operates its four business groups - Dental, Medical, International and Technology - through a centralized and automated distribution network, which provides customers in more than 125 countries with a comprehensive selection of over 80,000 national and Henry Schein private-brand products. Henry Schein also offers a wide range of innovative value-added practice solutions, including such leading practice management software systems as DENTRIX(R) and Easy Dental(R), for dental practices, and AVImark(R) for veterinary clinics, which are installed in over 44,000 practices; and ArubA(R), Henry Schein's electronic catalog and ordering system.

Headquartered in Melville, New York, Henry Schein employs over 6,500 people in 16 countries. The Company's 2001 sales reached a record \$2.6 billion. For more information, visit the Henry Schein Web site at www.henryschein.com.

CONTACT:

Henry Schein, Inc., Melville
Steven Paladino, 631/843-5500
Susan Vassallo, 631/843-5562

svassa@henryschein.com

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