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## ORANGE COUNTY RESIDENTS TURN TO RETAIL CLINICS FOR FLU SHOTS AND TREATMENT FOR THEIR COLD/FLU SYMPTOMS

Orange County, CA (January 21, 2014) – As influenza activity continues to increase in Orange County and the number of cases expected to grow over the next several weeks, many locals are forgoing the long wait at urgent care centers and emergency rooms and heading to retail health clinics like MemorialCare HealthExpress inside select ALBERTSONS/Sav-On Pharmacy stores for their flu shot and cold and flu care.

“We have the opportunity to make health care easier for busy individuals and families who need treatment of minor illnesses, immunizations and other basic health care needs,” says Shelly Lummus, FNP-BC, Ed.D, director of retail medicine, MemorialCare Health System. “While the concept of retail health clinics is still new for many, what patients tell us time after time is how much they appreciated the convenience and how pleased they were with the care they received.”

As newly insured individuals and families obtain coverage through the health exchange in 2014, retail clinics are expected to serve as key treatment locations in Orange County and across the nation. The popularity of walk-in health clinics has been on the rise nationwide. According to a Harris Interactive/HealthDay poll, 27% of adults said they have used either walk-in retail clinics (19%) or work-based clinics (11%) to receive medical care in the past two years. In 2008, just 7% gave the same response.

Orange County Health Care Agency reported 26 severe cases of influenza this season, including four deaths in their January 17 report. HealthExpress advises the public to protect themselves and others from the flu by following these tips:

- The CDC recommends an **annual flu shot** for everyone 6 months of age and over as the first, and most important, step in protecting against seasonal influenza. This is especially true if you are in close contact with infants, young children and the elderly.
- If you get sick, **stay home** from work and/or school and seek medical care from a health care provider or your primary care physician.

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Try to **avoid** close contact with sick people.
- **Avoid** touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

MemorialCare HealthExpress is open Monday through Friday 9 am to 9 pm; Saturday from 9 am to 5 pm, and Sunday 10 am to 6 pm. Appointments are not required, and wait time for care is minimal. Flu shots at HealthExpress are \$29.99 and treatment for most common illnesses is \$59 –insurance may cover all or a portion of the visit. The clinics accept payment by cash, check and credit cards as well as most insurance plans.

Located inside ALBERTSONS in **Huntington Beach, Irvine** and **Mission Viejo** MemorialCare HealthExpress provides care for adults and children beginning at age two. Highly trained nurse practitioners with advanced degrees, under the clinical direction of MemorialCare Health System and its affiliated physicians, offer treatment for common illnesses, skin conditions, minor wounds, vaccinations as well as routine lab procedures and school physicals.

For more information, the general public can visit [www.memorialcare.org/healthexpress](http://www.memorialcare.org/healthexpress)

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