

*Due to the high incidence and severity of influenza, currently, the article, below, first published in the December 14, 2011 edition of StarNews, is reprinted to strongly emphasize the need to immunize for all who are able to take the vaccine.*



## New Hanover-Pender County Medical Society

*"Here we are at a point in history where we have more education and more available vaccine than at any other time in all of human history, and yet we cannot get ourselves immunized. It haunts me that vulnerable patients could have severe complications and even die as a result of the disease we pass on to them."*

Greg Poland, MD in *American Medical News*, Published 09-12-11 ()

An Open Letter to Area Physicians, Dentists, Clergy, Childcare Centers, Personal Care Professionals, School Systems, Nursing Homes, Rest Homes, Group Homes, Health Departments, All Long Term Care Facilities and the Community at Large

From: The New Hanover-Pender County Medical Society and  
The New Hanover County Department of Public Health

Subject: Immunization Against Influenza

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

As you are well aware, influenza can be deadly, particularly to the very young and very old populations. Especially to those whose health is already compromised by illness or frail health.

In an effort to curb the transmission of influenza by providers, teachers, staffs and anyone with close person-to-person contact with a patient, student or client, we, as Medical Society members and Health Department officials, strongly support the policy that all such persons in the workforce be vaccinated against influenza \* in the interest of public health. Even to the point of adopting immunization against influenza as a condition of

employment. (Dr. Jeffrey Engel, State Director of Public Health stated, in a conversation on September ninth, that nursing homes, for instance, may, legally, mandate immunization for employees.)

Understanding, full well, that many of you have already given employees numerous incentives for immunization or adopted immunization as a condition of employment, we petition you: *Please put into practice all reasonable measures to rally behind the effort to immunize against influenza.* We look forward to receiving word of any implementation guidelines that you are able to achieve.

Feel free to contact us, at any time.

Yours very truly,

Philip M. Brown, Jr., MD

Philip M. Brown, Jr., MD, 2011 President  
New Hanover-Pender County Medical Society

## **David E. Rice, MPH, MA**

David E. Rice, MPH, MA, Director  
New Hanover County Health Department

\* The vaccine against influenza is highly effective and easily accessible with few, if any, side effects for the vast majority of the general population over six months of age.



Brown



Rice