



THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
IMMUNOLOGISTS

**Statement of Beth A. Garvy, Ph.D., Chair of the Committee on Public Affairs of  
The American Association of Immunologists (AAI), Regarding the Threat of Influenza**

**March 9, 2018**

Each year, seasonal outbreaks of influenza cause an estimated 9.2 million to 35.6 million illnesses, 140,000 to 710,000 hospitalizations, and 12,000 to 56,000 deaths in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The best way for people to reduce their risk of getting sick is to receive an annual flu vaccine, which is recommended for almost everyone 6 months of age and older.<sup>2</sup> It is particularly important for children, since about 80% of children who die from flu-associated causes were not vaccinated.<sup>3</sup>

While receiving an annual flu vaccine is currently the best way to prevent influenza and lessen its severity in those who are infected, these vaccines have limited efficacy, generally ranging from ~10% to ~60%.<sup>4</sup> Development and widespread use of a universal flu vaccine, which would provide long-lasting protection against many strains of influenza, would preclude the need for annual vaccination while limiting the severity and spread of the disease. Important work to develop such a vaccine is ongoing, and it is essential that the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) receive robust funding to support the research, development, and public health efforts necessary to reduce influenza-associated morbidity and mortality.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/burden.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/us\\_flu-related\\_deaths.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/us_flu-related_deaths.htm)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/effectiveness-studies.htm> (based on the 2005 through 2018 flu seasons)