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October 3, 2014

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ALANA'S FOUNDATION COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL FREE IN-SCHOOL INFLUENZA VACCINATION PILOT IN MICHIGAN

Alana's Foundation, in partnership with Health Heroes, has successfully completed its school-located vaccination pilot in Michigan. The program offered free flu vaccinations during school to students in participating districts the week of September 15, 2014. Approximately 3,500 students across 9 districts were vaccinated providing a healthier school environment and lower absenteeism throughout the upcoming flu season. The result is an increase in interest from other schools wanting to participate and just the success needed to expand across the state next fall.

Why get a flu vaccine? The best way to minimize or avoid the spread of flu is to get an annual flu vaccination. Since the vaccine protects against new strains every year, the vaccine should be administered annually. Nationwide every season, children miss more than 38 million days of school, about 20,000 children are hospitalized from flu related complications and more than 1243 children have died since 2003 - from a vaccine preventable disease.

Alana's Foundation was founded in 2009 in memory of Alana Yaksich, an Michigan kindergartener who died from influenza in 2003. Their mission is to educate the public about the importance of yearly influenza vaccinations and in doing so, increase vaccination rates by providing convenient and affordable flu vaccination options.

"We urge everyone to please take the flu seriously," says Zachary Yaksich, Alana's father and foundation president. "We never knew the flu could kill until we lost Alana. A simple yearly vaccination will help protect you and your family from this potentially deadly virus and the pain of losing a child."

Providing community vaccination options has been part of the Alana's Foundation mission since its inception. This year, Alana's Foundation has partnered with Health Heroes, Inc., who specialize in school-located flu vaccination clinics. FluMist Quadrivalent pain-free, nasal spray vaccine or Flu Zone injectable are administered by state-licensed nurses at NO COST to students, parents, schools or local/state government. Student participation is voluntary.

Health Heroes bills both Medicaid and private insurance. Qualifying uninsured students are also given the vaccine free of charge. School employees who carry private health insurance are also eligible to be vaccinated.

Yaksich is pleased with the results of the pilot thus far, "It is our hope that these clinics will make it easier for everyone who wants to receive a flu vaccination has convenient access to getting one. Partnering with Health Heroes allows us to reach more people efficiently and effectively as we now look forward to expanding the program statewide next fall ensuring a healthier community every flu season."

Alana's Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded in memory of Alana Yaksich who died of influenza in February 2003. Recognition includes the 2012 Michigan Honoree for the Center for Disease Control Childhood Immunization Champion Award, and the 2012 Alliance for Immunization in Michigan Outstanding Achievement Award. Visit www.alanasfoundation.org for more information.