National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001

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TO: Distribution

FROM: Chief Health and Medical Officer

SUBJECT: Influenza Immunizations during the 2004-2005 Flu Season

As a result of an urgent vaccine supply shortage, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued interim recommendations for influenza vaccination during the 2004–2005 season. As a Federal Agency, we will be supporting and following their recommendations.

This letter is being sent to provide information to insure that clinics across NASA work together during this period. We are currently working on a strategy to best share available vaccine among Centers to meet the needs of the NASA workforce.

Based upon the CDC interim guidelines, NASA's criteria of eligibility for influenza immunization of its workforce will be:

- Anyone 65 and older
- Persons with an underlying chronic medical condition that places them at high risk for complications from influenza (includes those with chronic heart or lung disease, such as asthma or reactive airways disease; people with medical conditions such as diabetes or kidney failure; or people with illnesses that weaken the immune system, or who take medications that can weaken the immune system)
- Women pregnant during this flu season
- Health care workers involved with direct patient care
- Caregivers for: debilitated household members, or children under 6 months old
- [International travelers]

An alternative influenza protection available from your personal health care provider is intranasal administered, live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), provided you are:

- Healthy (without medical problems or pregnant) and less than 50 y.o.
- A healthcare worker who is not handling severely immunocompromised patients
- A person caring for children < 6 months

Health habits that can also help to avoid a significant influenza problem are:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- If possible, stay home from work, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.