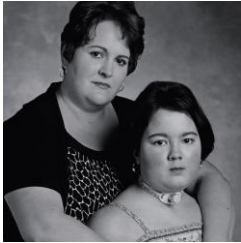




## SAMPLE NEWSLETTER EXCERPTS FOR FAITH-BASED FLU PREVENTION

Reprint these for your newsletter...find electronic copies at [www.chicagofaithandhealth.org](http://www.chicagofaithandhealth.org).

### ***Mother and Daughter Influenza Survivors “Count the Cost” and Choose Vaccination***



Within days of each other, both Amie and Cailey Welch contracted life-threatening cases of influenza and while both survived, it was a long, hard battle that left young

Cailey with long-term effects. Mother of 3, Amie Welch contracted a severe case of influenza that left her incapacitated and hospitalized for about a month. Amie was so ill that she was unaware that while she was trying to recover from her own case of influenza, one of her daughters was in the hospital suffering from an even more severe case.

Cailey, 11, was in the hospital for more than 6 months where she was on a ventilator causing her to not only miss school, but also important moments of her life, such as holidays and her birthday. Cailey’s recovery process was very long and slow, and she still suffers from some of the complications of the disease, such as a tracheostomy and relying on an oxygen machine to assist her breathing from time to time.

“Moms are supposed to fix everything for their children,” said Amie. “It was hard to sit there and watch her go through this and not be able to help.” The rest of Amie’s family managed to avoid contracting the illness, including Cailey’s twin sister, but the entire Welch family has seen firsthand the seriousness of the disease and the devastating effects it could have on healthy people.

Amie and Cailey have joined the *Faces of Influenza* campaign to educate other families about the seriousness of influenza and the need for vaccination for everyone 6 months of age and older.<sup>1</sup>

“You have to take it seriously,” said Amie. “This isn’t a cold. It can happen to anyone. We’re proof of that and will get vaccinated to help prevent anything like this from happening ever again.” For more stories like Amie’s and Cailey’s visit [www.facesofinfluenza.com](http://www.facesofinfluenza.com).

Amie and Cailey suffered unnecessarily and understandably want to ensure others don’t have to. Faith communities like ours can make a difference by educating people about the dangers of flu, helping people find affordable vaccines, teaching healthy lifestyle principles like hygiene and nutrition, and assisting one another (sensibly) to minimize lost work and caregiving time. *Together, we can faithfully prevent the flu. For more information, visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).*

#### **Reference:**

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prevention and control of influenza with vaccines: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), 2010. *MMWR*. 2010;59(RR-8):1-62.

*Compiled and edited by Rev. Jacki Belile, CEC, Project Consultant for The Center for Faith and Community Health Transformation. Visit [www.chicagofaithandhealth.org](http://www.chicagofaithandhealth.org) to download a copy of this article.*

## WHAT DOES FAITH HAVE TO DO WITH THE FLU?

It's a busy world, and an admittedly stressed and busy winter holiday SEASON. Do faith communities really need to be asked *to think of one more thing? And, really... THE FLU? Isn't that a private medical matter? An issue for the public health experts?*

A famous rabbi once said "My neighbor's material need is my spiritual need." During each flu season, the vulnerabilities to great suffering, including potential hospitalization and death, remind us that our spiritual journeys demand attention to the messy world around us. A Christian text in the book of James says, "Without works, faith is dead." Vast disparities in health condition and access to health care resources result in vulnerable populations' disproportionate suffering. Flu can have a major impact on the overall health and functioning of a community, especially for those who are vulnerable—children, frail elderly, those with limited English, those who are economically challenged, refugees, the undocumented, etc. A history of the toll influenza has taken upon millions of people can be found at [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) and [www.facesofinfluenza.com](http://www.facesofinfluenza.com).

All faith traditions call upon us to be faithful in serving the needs of the most vulnerable. Each also teaches personal responsibility to adherents, an ethic of stewardship so that our health might serve the positive purpose of our lives and also protect our loved ones from harm. Purity and cleanliness is central to Islam. Buddhists remind us that Buddha said "To keep the body in good health is a duty... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear."

In sum, it is a sacred duty to strive for healthy lives in general and a loving and literate protection against potentially tragic illness such as the flu during this season.

Learn more about faith-based flu prevention in this resource packet or on-line at [www.chicagofaithandhealth.org](http://www.chicagofaithandhealth.org).

--Rev. Jacki Belile, CEC, Project Consultant, *The Center for Faith and Community Health Transformation*.

### TOP 5 FLU PREVENTION TIPS FOR FAITH COMMUNITIES

1. Get an annual vaccination.
2. Know where your members and neighbors can find affordable vaccine and help them do so. Pay special attention to the protection of the most vulnerable.
3. Make vaccination easier by obtaining vouchers for a local pharmacy or hosting a flu clinic.
4. Teach and model healthy lifestyles of nutrition, stress management and hygiene.
5. Make sure the highest of hygiene standards are met in your place of worship, and necessary supplies are easy to locate in all portions of your building.

To explore acquiring vaccine vouchers or hosting a flu clinic event in Chicago, contact the Chicago Department of Public Health at 312-746-6129 or visit [www.chicagohan.org](http://www.chicagohan.org). For suburban Cook County, DuPage County or Lake County inquiries, contact Melissa Ponce at the Chicago Area Immunization Campaign at [mponce@ilmaternal.org](mailto:mponce@ilmaternal.org) or 312-491-8161 ext 33.