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Sarasota County to participate in national Vote and Vax project

The Sarasota County Health Department, in cooperation with the Supervisor of Elections (SOE) office, will offer flu vaccinations at three early voting sites during the early voting period Oct. 18-31.

As part of the national Vote and Vax project, health care providers will offer flu shots outside the three SOE offices in Sarasota County. Hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday. The cost of the shots will be \$20 to \$35, depending on the provider.

Early voting locations include the Sarasota County Terrace Building, 101 S. Washington Blvd., Sarasota; the Robert L. Anderson Building, 4000 S. Tamiami Trail South, Venice; and the SOE office in Biscayne Plaza, 13640 Tamiami Trail, and North Port.

Vote and Vax clinics are part of an innovative public health strategy sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Sickness Prevention Achieved through Regional Collaboration. The project increases access to flu vaccine, with a focus on reaching older Americans.

Getting a flu shot is the best defense against the flu. "Making flu shots more convenient is a proven way to increase the number of people vaccinated," says Joan Surso, RN, community adult immunization coordinator with the Sarasota County Health Department. "The more people who are vaccinated, the more the community is protected."

The Sarasota County Flu and Pneumonia Coalition member organizations that will be providing flu shots to adults only include A Familiar Face Home Health Services, Sarasota Health Care Services, Visiting Nurses Association, CVS and Walgreens.

For more information about Vote and Vax, visit www.voteandvax.org. To learn more about the local Vote and Vax flu shot clinics, call the Sarasota County Health Department's flu information line at 941-861-2800 or visit the website at www.sarasotahealth.org.