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FAMILIES APPLAUD CDC'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON IMMUNIZATION PRACTICES VOTE TO VACCINATE MORE CHILDREN AGAINST INFLUENZA

- Families Fighting Flu Recognizes Important Step To Safeguard Children From Deadly Effects of Influenza Virus -

ATLANTA, Ga., February 22, 2006 – Families Fighting Flu, Inc., fully supports today's vote by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to expand the current influenza vaccine recommendation to include children aged 24 months to 59 months. The ACIP also voted today to evaluate a strategy of universal influenza vaccination. Families Fighting Flu supports this initiative.

The ACIP's former influenza vaccine recommendation only included children aged six months to 23 months; otherwise healthy children older than age two were not recommended to receive the vaccine. This failure to vaccinate additional age groups may have resulted in the needless deaths of young children.

"The effort of the ACIP to pass this crucial vote represents an important first step in protecting the safety and wellbeing of children," said Richard Kanowitz, president of Families Fighting Flu. Kanowitz's four-year-old daughter, Amanda, died suddenly in March 2004, from complications related to influenza. At the time of her death, Amanda did not fall within the influenza vaccine recommendations and therefore was not vaccinated against the flu. "Families Fighting Flu encourages the ACIP to continue to examine the merits of universal vaccination for all children 18 years and younger, and ultimately expand the recommendation to include this age group."

Every year, children die in the United States from influenza and its complications. Children are the most vulnerable population during flu season due to their less-developed immune systems. In fact, they face a two-to-three-fold greater chance of contracting influenza than adults. The flu vaccine can help children stay free of influenza during the

flu season, and potentially help stop the spread of the virus to their families and communities.

“More than 190 children have died from influenza over the past two flu seasons,” said Joe Lastinger, secretary/treasurer of Families Fighting Flu, whose three-year-old daughter, Emily, died from influenza in 2004. “These are unnecessary losses that impact everyone in the community, including siblings, grandparents and schoolmates. With this expanded influenza vaccine recommendation, more children will receive the vaccine and more lives will potentially be saved.”

About Families Fighting Flu, Inc.

Families Fighting Flu, Inc. is a group of families and pediatricians, incorporated as a non-profit in 2005, who have lost a child to the flu or whose child experienced severe medical complications from the influenza virus. Each year, children die from the flu and the Families Fighting Flu members are dedicated to providing comfort to one another as well as to educating others about the importance of vaccinating children against flu every year. The goal of Families Fighting Flu is to educate families and pediatricians about the importance of annual flu immunization for children. The organization is urging the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) – the group of experts who provide advice and guidance to the CDC on the most effective means to prevent vaccine-preventable diseases – to recommend annual influenza vaccination for all children, to ensure that parents get their children vaccinated against the flu every year. For more information about Families Fighting Flu, go to www.familiesfightingflu.org.

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