



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

December 22, 2009

### **Sheriff's Office Receives Flu Shots**

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses and spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing by infected persons. The flu may also be spread if an individual touches a surface infected with the flu virus and then touches his/her nose or mouth. The flu can cause mild to severe illness, and in some cases, lead to death. According to the Centers for Disease Control, "each year in the United States on average, 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu; on average, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu-related complications; and, about 36,000 people die from flu-related causes."

First responders to emergencies, including law enforcement officers, carry a greater risk of contracting the flu virus, as they work rotating shifts in extreme weather conditions which increases their chances of coming into contact with those who suffer from cold and flu-like symptoms.

The best way to decrease the chances of contracting seasonal flu is by getting a seasonal flu vaccination. The St. Mary's Hospital, in cooperation with the St. Mary's Health Department, Department of Public Safety and Emergency Medical System, collaborated to provide flu vaccinations to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office personnel. On December 21, 2009, Dr. Michael P. Somers, along with volunteer nursing staff from St. Mary's Hospital, came to the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office Headquarters to vaccinate sheriff's office personnel. "I encourage anyone in public safety to be vaccinated to prevent the spread of influenza. Emergency responders face a greater risk of contracting influenza" said Dr. Somers.

Earlier in December the St. Mary's County Detention Center held an immunization clinic for correctional officers, civilian staff and inmates at the Detention Center. The vaccines were provided by the Center for Disease Control and administered by the detention center nurse. Personnel not available for that clinic had a second opportunity to be vaccinated on December 21, 2009.

Sheriff Timothy K. Cameron elaborated even further, "Deputies respond to the needs of the public, including those individuals who are ill. I believe it is prudent for Sheriff's Office personnel to be vaccinated against seasonal as well as the H1N1 flu. I appreciate St. Mary's Hospital and the Health Department offering flu shots to help protect our deputies, correctional officers and civilian personnel from contracting or spreading the influenza virus. This prevention program is another fine example of the successful working relationship the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office has with private and non-profit entities within our community."

A total of 75 flu vaccinations were provided to Sheriff's Office personnel, including Sheriff Timothy Cameron through both immunization clinics.



Dr. Michael Somers and Sheriff Timothy Cameron



Nurse Dawn Weber and Captain Daniel Alioto