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Text4baby Encourages Moms to Get the Flu Shot New Interactive Feature Reminds Moms about Flu Appointments

WASHINGTON, DC, October 25, 2011 – Text4baby, the free mobile health service for pregnant women and new moms, is launching a new enhancement to the program. The text4baby service will now include additional educational messages about the flu shot and an option for users to receive flu shot appointment reminders. Through this enhancement, text4baby aims to help reduce obstacles to immunization and support healthy behaviors by offering interactivity in the service.

“Every mom-to-be and mother of infants needs to know how important the flu shot is for the whole family’s health,” said Judy Meehan, CEO of the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, the nonprofit organization which serves as the programmatic home of the service. “Text4baby is allowing us to share important reminders in a way that women find convenient, as well as easy to understand and use.”

Today, text4baby subscribers in five states (GA, KS, PA, UT, and WA) will be asked if they’re planning to get a flu shot. Their responses will prompt the system to send a follow-up message, which may include an educational message and/or the option to receive a general or specific reminder for a flu shot. Subscribers will subsequently be asked again if have received or are planning to get a flu shot. The flu service will be offered nationally to all active subscribers on October 27, two days after the pilot launch.

Vaccination for flu is critical:

- Pregnant women are at higher risk for morbidity and mortality from flu.
- Pregnant woman with flu have a greater chance for serious problems for their baby, including premature labor and delivery.
- Getting the flu shot while pregnant helps protect babies even after birth (for up to 6 months).
- Infants under 6 months are particularly at risk for flu, since they are too young to get vaccinated. Babies are best protected from flu when everyone around him or her gets a flu shot.

How text4baby Works

Women who text "BABY" (or "BEBE" for Spanish) to 511411 receive three text messages a week, timed to their due date or their baby's birth date through the baby's first year. Text4baby is made possible through a public-private partnership that includes government, corporations, academic institutions, professional associations, tribal agencies and non-profit organizations. Johnson & Johnson is the founding sponsor. Founding partners include the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, Voxiva, CTIA - The Wireless Foundation, and Grey Healthcare Group (WPP company).

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About National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition

The National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition is the only coalition of its kind which acts as a catalyst for change by creating partnerships among community groups, nonprofit organizations, professional associations, businesses and government agencies. The Coalition promotes optimal health for mothers and babies, and works to strengthen families and build healthy communities.