

Free influenza vaccinations for people aged 65 years plus

10 March 2004
ABB025/04

Most Australians aged 65 years and over are receiving free influenza vaccine under the Australian Government's Influenza Vaccine Program for Older Australians, according to the results of a study released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

The Minister for Health, Tony Abbott, welcomed the results, which showed that almost 77 per cent of Australians aged 65 and over had an influenza vaccination in 2003.

"Since the introduction of the scheme in 1999, there has been an increase in the rate of immunisation against the flu. Last year, nearly eight in every ten Australians aged 65 years and over received an influenza vaccination, similar to the figures achieved in 2002," Mr Abbott said.

"In our aged care facilities, some 87 per cent of residents received the vaccination. It is important that people aged 65 years and over, who are at greatest risk, take the opportunity to get this free flu shot."

This year, the Australian Government has again allocated \$26 million to the influenza vaccination program for older Australians. The Australian Government has a strong record in immunisation with expenditure on vaccines increasing 11-fold from just over \$13 million in 1996 to \$143 million this year.

For more information call Mr Abbott's office on ph 02 6277 7220.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/ministers/publishing.nsf/Content/health-mediarel-yr2004-ta-abb025.htm?OpenDocument&yr=2004&mth=3>