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**17th U.S. SURGEON GENERAL CARMONA ANNOUNCES NEW
NATIONAL COALITION TO INCREASE LOW INFLUENZA
IMMUNIZATION RATES IN CHILDREN**

*NFID Forms New Coalition Comprised of Medical and Patient Groups to
Make Pediatric Influenza Immunization a Public Health Priority*

Atlanta, Georgia, April 19, 2007 — Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS, 17th Surgeon General of the United States (2002-2006) and Canyon Ranch Institute president, today announced a new *Pediatric Influenza Immunization Coalition*. The *Coalition* is an initiative of the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) that aims to increase alarmingly low influenza immunization rates in children in the United States.

NFID today appointed Dr. Carmona to serve as chairman of the *Coalition*, which represents more than 20 of the nation's leading public health, medical and parent organizations committed to improving pediatric influenza immunization rates.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), only 18 percent of children 6 to 23 months of age were fully vaccinated during the 2004-2005 season; approximately 100 children under 5 years of age die each year from the disease.

“Too few children are getting vaccinated against the preventable influenza illness. With safe and effective vaccines readily available, even one death is a tremendous tragedy, because it could have been prevented,” said Dr. Carmona. “The *Pediatric Influenza Immunization Coalition* will bring together many of the nation's leading health care and patient groups to form one strong voice to call for improved pediatric vaccination rates. Our goal is to help health care providers and parents make annual pediatric influenza immunization a priority.”

In addition, as part of the Canyon Ranch Institute's *The Year of Wellness and Prevention* initiative, Dr. Carmona announced that the NFID's *Pediatric Influenza Immunization Coalition* is the Institute's first Prevention Partner. The *Pediatric Influenza Immunization Coalition* announcements were made at the 2007 National Influenza Vaccine Summit, held in Atlanta, Georgia, April 19 to 20. NFID is a member of the Summit, which is comprised of more than 100 public and private organizations with an interest in resolving influenza vaccine issues and increasing utilization of vaccine in accordance with CDC recommendations. The Summit is co-sponsored by the American Medical Association and the CDC.

“As Surgeon General and now president of Canyon Ranch Institute, Dr. Carmona has been a strong advocate for both children’s health and prevention,” said NFID President Carol J. Baker, M.D. “NFID is honored to have the leadership of Dr. Carmona as chairman of the *Pediatric Influenza Immunization Coalition*.” Dr. Baker, a pediatric infectious disease specialist, is a Professor of Pediatrics, Molecular Virology and Microbiology and Head of the Section of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas.

Low Influenza Immunization Rates in Children

Health experts are concerned with low influenza immunization rates because studies show that children younger than 24 months of age are hospitalized due to influenza at rates similar those of adults 65 years of age and older. Children 2 to 5 years of age are at greater risk of severe disease as well, with more frequent visits to clinics, hospitals and emergency departments than older children.

“To achieve the *Coalition*’s goal of making pediatric influenza immunization a priority among medical and consumer groups, we will look at ways to ensure that every opportunity to vaccinate is utilized throughout the influenza season,” said Dr. Baker. “We also need to focus on educating parents about the potential severity of influenza to drive them to seek yearly vaccination for their infants and toddlers. Increased rates in children will not only protect a future generation from influenza but also interrupt disease transmission to adults.”

About the NFID Pediatric Influenza Immunization Coalition

NFID has formed the *Pediatric Influenza Immunization Coalition* to make pediatric immunization a public health priority throughout the entire influenza season and to educate parents about influenza and drive them to seek immunization on an annual basis. The *Pediatric*

Influenza Immunization Coalition initiative is made possible through an unrestricted educational grant to NFID from sanofi pasteur.

The *Pediatric Influenza Immunization Coalition* is chaired by Richard Carmona, M.D., M.P.H. FACS, who served as the 17th Surgeon General of the United States from 2002 to 2006.

About Influenza

Influenza is a serious respiratory illness that, along with its complications, results in an average of 36,000 deaths and approximately 226,000 hospitalizations in the U.S. each year. All children 6 to 59 months of age and children up to 18 years of age with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma and diabetes, are at increased risk for complications from influenza and should be immunized every year. Pregnant women and children 6 to 59 months of age, as well as their household contacts also should be vaccinated to help prevent influenza-related complications and the spread of this dangerous virus.

About the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) is a non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1973 and dedicated to educating the public and healthcare professionals about the causes, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases. For more information, please visit www.nfid.org.

About Canyon Ranch Institute

The Canyon Ranch Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring and educating people across America so they can make positive, healthy choices for themselves and their families. More information is available at www.canyonranchinstitute.org.

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