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SNEEZ APP SHARES LESSONS FOR PARENTS FROM 1918 FLU PANDEMIC

Illness monitoring and prevention vital to children's health and safety during flu season

Winston-Salem, NC / January 11, 2018 – January marks the centennial of the infamous 1918 Spanish Influenza pandemic, when one-third of the world's population became infected and as many as 100 million people died.

During annual flu season, this historic episode is a reminder for parents about the importance of preparation, diligence and decisive action in preventing and managing illness in their homes and communities.

“Keeping informed with timely, actionable data about what illnesses are circulating can improve health and wellbeing,” said Dr. Bill Satterwhite, a pediatrician in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. “This is especially true for parents, whose decisions regarding contagious illness in their families can have broader impact in neighborhoods, schools and workplaces.”

Satterwhite and Dr. Steve Hodges, a practicing pediatric urologist in Winston-Salem, developed Sneeze[®], a free crowdsourcing mobile application that tracks illness outbreaks in schools and at extracurricular activity locations.

Here's how the app works: Parents create a private profile for each child. When the child gets sick, the parent uses the app to anonymously report symptoms and illnesses, generating an alert to other Sneeze users at affected schools or extracurricular sites. “The more the app is used, the more accurate the data and the better informed and prepared households and the entire community are,” Satterwhite said. “School administrators, public health officials and medical providers also may use the data to help manage and prevent illness outbreaks.”

Flu season generally peaks in January and February and can last through May. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 200,000 Americans are hospitalized for flu-related complications annually while flu-related deaths have ranged from 3,000 to 49,000. Young children are among the most vulnerable to the disease.

According to Satterwhite, prevention is best course to avoid or mitigate the effects of the flu. Wash hands frequently and stay home if you're sick. Also get a flu shot; although the vaccine is not foolproof in preventing the illness, it can reduce the severity of symptoms.

While most flu cases may be handled at home under doctor supervision, a patient should go to the emergency room when symptoms include difficulty breathing, vomiting, chest or abdominal pain, confusion, lethargy and high fever (Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/symptoms.htm>).

The 1918 pandemic was notable for its ferocity and scale. First observed in Europe, the disease quickly spread to the United States, Asia and across the globe, overwhelming public services and driving schools and businesses to close. (Source: <http://www.history.com/topics/1918-flu-pandemic>).

“A century after the Spanish Flu outbreak, our society remains vulnerable to influenza. But fortunately, we have modern tools like Sneeze to help combat the spread of illness,” Satterwhite said. “We believe the app will enable parents and others to make informed decisions that lead to healthier, more productive families and communities.”

Download Sneeze for free from the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#). For more information, visit www.sneezapp.com.

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