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## DOCTORS URGE VULNERABLE TO VACCINATE

Doctors are urging Queenslanders to get the flu jab without delay as the number of confirmed influenza cases in the state soars towards 15,000.

AMA Queensland President Dr Bill Boyd said the flu season could still have many weeks to run and that vaccination offered the best line of defence against the virus.

“The vaccine takes two to three weeks to reach maximum effectiveness and the season has yet to reach its peak – so get a flu jab if you haven’t already,” Dr Boyd said.

“The vaccine is free for the over-65s, pregnant women and patients with specific medical conditions, including cardiac disease, diabetes and chronic respiratory conditions.

“These groups should make an appointment to see their family doctor without delay.

“Most people will recover from flu after a few days, but vulnerable patients can become seriously ill and require hospitalisation.”

Dr Boyd said the total number of flu cases in the state would far exceed the 14,455 laboratory-confirmed cases recorded by Queensland Health as of yesterday.

He urged the public to follow the advice of Health Minister Cameron Dick and to avoid attending hospital emergency departments unless absolutely necessary.

“EDs are busy at the best of times and right now hospital doctors and their health service colleagues are fully stretched,” Dr Boyd said.

“If you have a medical problem your first course of action should always be to consult your family doctor. Emergency departments are for emergencies only.”

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