




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles
MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Foulds, Mrs J; Flu Season

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services) (10.00 am): I know that every member of this House will have been saddened to hear the story of Jacinta Foulds. She was a young fit and healthy Queensland mum who was taken from her family by the flu two weeks ago. Our hearts go out to her husband, Dan, and to her children, Lily, who is 11, Cory, who is 10, and Indy, who is seven. Yesterday the grief-stricken family dragged themselves to the doctor for a flu shot. If Dan can go and get his kids vaccinated, every single one of us can.

Sadly, Jacinta is just one of 95 Queenslanders taken by the flu this year. Health experts believe that Queensland's shocking flu season has not even hit its peak and will probably get worse. More people could get sick, more could end up in intensive care and more could die. Flu does not discriminate. It can and does affect fit and healthy Queenslanders every year. So far this year we have been notified of 46,011 laboratory confirmed flu cases across the state, including 2,185 admissions to public hospitals, with 212 people requiring admission to an intensive care unit. The proportion of people with influenza being admitted to Queensland Health hospitals is highest in children under one year of age and in adults over 60 years of age.

No parent wants to see their baby in a hospital bed. That is why the Palaszczuk government funds free flu vaccines for children aged six months to less than five years. The vaccine is safe and is one of the best ways to protect children from flu. Other ways we can stop the spread of the flu are by washing our hands regularly, covering our mouths and noses when we sneeze or cough and staying home from school, work or child care if we are sick. The Palaszczuk government has committed a record \$20 million to support hospital and health services this winter season, including the implementation of the Winter Beds Strategy. That is double the usual investment. However, we need everyone's help to stop the spread of the flu.

While I am on my feet, I remind members that tomorrow is Daffodil Day. I urge everyone to buy a daffodil and raise lifesaving funds for world-class cancer research.