

## FamilyCare Offers Free Shingles Vaccine to Oregon Medicare Enrolled Members

*by Bend Weekly News Sources*

### New Vaccine Puts the Pox on Shingles for Adult Sufferers of the Painful Infection

PORTLAND, Ore., Dec. 21 /PRNewswire/ -- The new vaccine for adult shingles is now available free of charge to Medicare members of FamilyCare. Known as Zostavax, the vaccine is used in adults age 60 and older and reduces the incidence of shingles by half and pain and discomfort by nearly two-thirds according to Merck research.

"This vaccine helps prevent an illness that affects many older Americans and often results in significant pain," said Jeff Heatherington, President. "While experts worried that partial insurance coverage of Zostavax might slow its acceptance, FamilyCare is committed to offering our valued members 100 percent coverage for a medical breakthrough vaccine that helps prevent illness and decrease pain. Providing this vaccine free of charge represents FamilyCare's commitment to the health of our members by providing leadership in the health plan field."

Shingles strikes when the chickenpox virus reactivates and resumes reproducing after lying dormant for decades in nerve cells in the body, causing itching, burning and tingling, as well as a distinctive red rash that develops into pus-filled blisters that later break open and form scabs. Pain, too, is common and can persist in some patients for months or years.

There are roughly 1 million new U.S. cases of shingles each year. It typically affects the elderly, though anyone with a weakened immune system is vulnerable. It is estimated that up to 50 percent of cases occur in those 60 years of age and older.

For more information, please visit <http://www.familycareinc.org/>.

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