NBA ALL-STAR CHAUNCEY BILLUPS TEAMS UP WITH VACCINES FOR TEENS EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO HELP TEENS TAKE THEIR BEST SHOT AT HEALTH

NEW YORK – February 3, 2011 – Five-time NBA All-Star Chauncey Billups is teaming up with NBA Cares, the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM), and Sanofi Pasteur (the vaccines division of the sanofi-aventis Group) as a spokesman for Vaccines for Teens, a national multimedia campaign designed to educate preteens, teens and their parents about the importance of vaccination against serious, potentially life-threatening diseases.

As Vaccines for Teens ambassador, Billups is featured in a new national public service announcement (PSA), which will air on NBA media and network/cable game broadcasts. Billups is also appearing today at a special Vaccines for Teens event at Merrill Middle School in Denver, Colo. During the event, NBA Cares Ambassador Bob Lanier will join the Nuggets All-Star to discuss the importance of adolescent vaccinations with more than 500 preteens and teens.

“As a father, nothing is more important to me than my children’s health,” said Billups. “I encourage parents to speak to their child’s health-care provider and get informed about how they can help protect their preteens and teens by getting them vaccinated.”

Preteens and teens are at risk for meningococcal disease, pertussis (whooping cough), and influenza, which can be spread through common, everyday activities. Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other leading medical groups recommend vaccination against these serious diseases, immunization rates among preteens and teens remain low, leaving too many children unprotected. Nationally, only half of adolescents 13 to 17 years of age have been vaccinated against meningococcal disease and pertussis.

“Vaccines can help protect the health of our teens, but too often families aren’t aware of the need and importance of vaccinations for adolescents. Parents can ask about vaccination during any health-care visit,” said Larry D’Angelo, MD, MPH, President of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine. “We welcome the support and cooperation of the NBA and Sanofi Pasteur in helping move this important health issue forward.”

Launched in February 2009, the Vaccines for Teens campaign hosted school events during the 2009-10 NBA season and the 2010 WNBA season. This year’s nationwide campaign includes visits to schools in Oklahoma City, Denver, Miami, Los Angeles and Dallas. Vaccines for Teens shares educational materials with parents and teens at each event and offers additional information online at www.vaccinesforteens.net.

“Vaccines for Teens is a great complement to our socially responsible initiatives,” says NBA Executive Vice President, Social Responsibility & Player Programs Kathy Behrens. “This campaign underscores our NBA Cares commitment to programs that support education, youth and family development, and health and wellness.”
About Vaccine-preventable Adolescent Diseases
Immunization is critically important for preteens and teens because they are at risk for serious and potentially life-threatening diseases. Parents should talk to their children’s health-care provider about vaccines for teens during their next health-care visit.

Influenza
Influenza is a viral infection that can become serious enough to keep teens home from school, sports and other activities. It can sometimes result in a visit to their health care provider or even the hospital or lead to serious complications like pneumonia or even death. Vaccination is the best protection against the spread of the influenza virus. The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get vaccinated against influenza each year. This year, the seasonal influenza vaccine includes the 2009 pandemic H1N1 strain, so only the seasonal influenza vaccine is needed. Vaccination begins as soon as vaccine becomes available, usually in August, and continues into spring or as long as the influenza virus is in circulation. In most seasons, influenza virus activity peaks in February or March, so vaccination throughout the entire influenza season is beneficial and recommended.

Meningococcal Disease / Meningococcal Meningitis
Although rare, meningococcal disease, including meningitis, is a serious, life-threatening infection that moves quickly and can lead to death within 24 to 48 hours of first symptoms. Early symptoms may be similar to influenza, making it difficult for health-care providers to diagnose. Public health officials recommend meningococcal vaccination for preteens and teens at the earliest possible health-care visit – ideally, during the routine 11- or 12-year-old check-up.

Pertussis, Commonly Called “Whooping Cough”
Pertussis is one of the most common respiratory diseases in American teens and adults. It causes a prolonged cough that can last weeks or months and can result in pneumonia or hospitalization. Teens and adults can spread pertussis to younger children, who can develop a life-threatening pertussis infection. The CDC recommends a single booster dose of Tdap vaccine for people 11 through 64 years of age; immunity to the pertussis vaccine decreases over time, so teens who don’t receive a booster vaccine may become vulnerable to this disease.

About the Vaccines for Teens Campaign
The NBA and the WNBA are collaborating with the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM) and sanofi pasteur on Vaccines for Teens, a national campaign designed to help educate parents and their teens about the importance of getting vaccinated.

About NBA Cares
NBA Cares is the league’s social responsibility initiative that builds on the NBA’s long tradition of addressing important social issues in the United States and around the world. Through this umbrella program, the NBA, its teams and players have donated more than $150 million to charity, completed more than 1.5 million hours of hands-on community service, and created more than 560 places where kids and families can live, learn, or play, in 22 countries and territories on five continents. NBA Cares works with internationally recognized youth-serving programs that support education, youth and family development, and health-related causes, including: KaBOOM!, Special Olympics, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, UNICEF, the Make-A-Wish Foundation, and the Global Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis.

About the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
SAHM is a multi-disciplinary organization of health professionals who are committed to advancing the health and well-being of adolescents. Through education, research, clinical services, and advocacy activities, members of the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine strive to enhance public and professional awareness of adolescent health issues among families, educators, policy makers, youth-
serving organizations, students who are considering a health career as well as other health professionals. SAHM members come from many different professional disciplines but share the common goal of better understanding the unique health needs and concerns of adolescents. For more information on SAHM, log onto www.adolescenthealth.org.

**About sanofi-aventis**
Sanofi-aventis, a leading global pharmaceutical company, discovers, develops and distributes therapeutic solutions to improve the lives of everyone. Sanofi-aventis is listed in Paris (EURONEXT: SAN) and in New York (NYSE: SNY). For more information, please visit: www.sanofi-aventis.com.

Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of the sanofi-aventis Group, provided more than 1.6 billion doses of vaccine in 2009, making it possible to immunize more than 500 million people across the globe. A world leader in the vaccine industry, Sanofi Pasteur offers the broadest range of vaccines protecting against 20 infectious diseases. The company's heritage, to create vaccines that protect life, dates back more than a century. Sanofi Pasteur is the largest company entirely dedicated to vaccines. Every day, the company invests more than EUR 1 million in research and development. For more information, please visit: www.sanofipasteur.com or www.sanofipasteur.us.

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**Contacts:**

**NBA:**
Madeline Wehle Crandall  
(212) 407-8284  
mcrandall@nba.com

**Nuggets PR:**
Tim Gelt  
303-405-1187  
tgelt@pepsicenter.com