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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHTENAW COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH RECEIVES H1N1 VACCINE Public Health Prepares for Mass Dispensing

YPSILANTI, Mich., Oct. 13, 2009 — The Washtenaw County Public Health Department received an initial allotment of 2009 H1N1 vaccine, including nasal spray (FluMist) and flu shots. Initial supplies are very limited. Shipments are expected to continue weekly and should provide enough H1N1 vaccine for prioritized groups by the end of October. Public Health is working closely with health care and community partners to provide available doses to priority populations as quickly and safely as possible.

Plans are in place to dispense vaccine in cooperation with health care providers serving the priority populations identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These priority groups include:

- pregnant women,
- people who live with or provide care for infants younger than six months,
- health care and emergency medical services personnel,
- people six months through 24 years of age and,
- people 25 years through 64 years of age who have certain medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications (i.e. cancer, chronic conditions like diabetes, weakened immune systems or other disorders).

“We don’t expect a shortage of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine,” says Dr. Diana Torres-Burgos, Washtenaw County Public Health Medical Director, “But it’s important to know that initial supplies are limited.”

Hospitals and private health care providers that have agreements in place with Public Health have started receiving limited allotments. Depending on the specific formulation (nasal spray or flu shots, etc.), some

supplies are coming through Public Health while others are being shipped directly to local providers. All initial supplies are dedicated for the CDC-defined priority groups listed above. Local residents who fit within these groups should first contact their individual health care provider to find out if the provider is offering H1N1 vaccinations. H1N1 vaccines are free of charge. Some providers may charge an administrative or office visit fee.

School-based mass vaccination clinics are scheduled to begin the first week of November, based on vaccine availability. Public school districts throughout Washtenaw County are working with Public Health to finalize clinic dates and details. Dates for additional public vaccination clinics will be scheduled and announced as adequate supplies are received locally. Information will be available by visiting <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org> or calling the main Public Health number 734-544-6700. Public Health nurses and health educators are available to answer H1N1 questions. Callers who speak languages other than English may request translation.

A flu vaccine remains the single best way to protect against influenza illness, including the novel H1N1 virus. H1N1 vaccine is produced in the same manner and by the same manufacturers as seasonal flu vaccinations: “Seasonal flu vaccine has an excellent safety record; 100 million people receive it every year,” says Dr. Torres-Burgos.

The 2009 H1N1 vaccine is available in two formulations, nasal spray and flu shots. Not all formulations of the vaccines will be available at all locations. Availability will continue to depend on what is received locally and when. The nasal spray is approved for use in healthy people two years to 49 years of age who are not pregnant. The flu shot is approved for use in people six months of age and older, including people with chronic medical conditions and pregnant women.

The H1N1 virus is currently circulating in Washtenaw County. Most of the cases are being diagnosed in children and young adults. Some hospitalizations are occurring. No deaths due to H1N1 virus have been reported in Washtenaw County residents to date.

For more information about Washtenaw County Public Health and local flu activity, please visit: <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org> or www.ewashtenaw.org/flu.

For more information about the Michigan Department of Community Health, please visit: http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2940_2955_22779_40563-213600--,00.html

For more information about H1N1 activity nationally or about the CDC-identified priority groups, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> or www.flu.gov.

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