



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRST LOCAL CASE OF INFLUNZA CONFIRMED

Flu Vaccine is Widely Available and Recommended for Everyone Six Months and Older

YPSILANTI, Mich., Oct 7, 2011 – Washtenaw County Public Health is announcing the first case of lab-confirmed influenza for the 2011-2012 season. The case is among the first in the state – and has arrived earlier than usual. Initial cases are more typically confirmed in late November or early December. The diagnosed individual is an Ypsilanti resident and has recovered.

“Flu can be unpleasant at best and serious or fatal at worst. Annual vaccination provides optimal protection, especially for persons at risk of severe complications including the elderly and those with underlying health conditions like asthma, heart failure or diabetes,” says Dr. Monique Reeves, MD, MPH, Medical Director for Washtenaw County Public Health. “It takes about two weeks after vaccination for the body to develop a protective immune response so it is important to get vaccinated as early in the season as possible,” she continued. This year there is an ample supply of vaccine and many places in the community to get it including medical providers, the health department and various local pharmacies.

Public Health reminds residents that annual flu vaccination and basic prevention strategies like hand washing provide the best protection against illness. Annual vaccination is recommended for everyone six months and older.

Washtenaw County Public Health will be holding a walk-in flu vaccination clinic on Wednesday, October 19th from 9:00 to 11:00 am. Additionally, appointments for vaccination may be scheduled by calling 734-544-6700. The cost is \$20. Medicaid and Medicare part B are accepted. Photo identification and proof of insurance will be required. Receipts can be provided for those requiring documentation for their insurance companies.

Members of the public who are unable to make it to the health department can utilize the Google flu vaccine finder (www.google.com/flushot) to identify other locations in the County where flu vaccines are being offered.

Although most people who get the flu will recover uneventfully from a mild to moderate illness that does not require medical care, some people will develop complications that result in hospitalization, and occasionally, in death. Flu seasons are unpredictable and can be severe. Compared with other infections like the common cold, influenza is more likely to cause severe illness and life-threatening complications in many people. Studies going back 30 years show that seasonal flu-related deaths have ranged from about 3,000 people to 49,000 people annually in the U.S.

According to the Michigan Department of Community Health, “**Even healthy people can get the flu, and it can be serious.** Everyone six months and older should get flu vaccine every year. This means you. This season, protect yourself - and those around you - by getting vaccinated.” Additional prevention strategies include:

- Wash hands frequently, especially after coughing, sneezing and handling used tissues.
- Avoid close contact with those who have colds or flu-like symptoms. Stay away from others if you are sick.
- After contact with a person who is ill, wash your hands and keep your fingers away from your eyes, nose and mouth to prevent the spread of the virus.
- Boost your immune system by eating a healthy diet and getting regular physical activity and plenty of rest.

For more information about Washtenaw County Public Health, please visit <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org>, or call us at 734-544-6700. Washtenaw County Public Health promotes health and works to prevent disease or injury in our community.

Visit the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) seasonal flu page at http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2940_2955_22779_40563-138142--,00.html.

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