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2009 H1N1 FLU UPDATE: Friday, January 8th, 2010

January 10th – 16th is National Influenza Vaccination Week

National Influenza Vaccination Week is the perfect opportunity for those who have not yet been vaccinated to get immunized against the 2009 H1N1 influenza. As many of you know, vaccination remains the best way to stay protected against the flu and to decrease its spread in the community. **It is not too late to be vaccinated!** In fact, the traditional flu season is just beginning and typically continues into the spring. Getting immunized now will protect you and your family for the remainder of the flu season. In addition, flu experts warn that we should prepare for a possible third wave (increase) of H1N1 in the coming months. (Please see the Flu Vaccination Information section below to find out where the vaccine is available near you.)

Since April 2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates there were approximately 47 million cases of H1N1 flu, more than 200,000 hospitalizations and nearly 10,000 deaths, with the vast majority of deaths occurring in children and non-elderly adults. Clearly, the H1N1 flu can be a serious illness.

Even considering these facts, some people are reluctant to get vaccinated because of inaccurate information they have heard regarding vaccine safety. The 2009 H1N1 vaccine, like the traditional seasonal flu vaccine, has been extensively reviewed and found to be safe, effective, and simply the best defense against becoming seriously ill with H1N1 influenza. In addition, one of the most common myths about flu vaccines is that they make you sick. This is simply false. The *flu* can make you and your loved ones ill. The *flu vaccine* will help to keep you healthy. Stay flu-free! Get vaccinated!

FLU VACCINATION INFORMATION

As of December 10th, the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine became available to all New Yorkers aged 6 months and older who want to be vaccinated.

The Albany County Department of Health (ACDOH) is offering the following public vaccination clinics in the upcoming weeks:

- Daily free H1N1 vaccination appointments at the Albany County Department of Health on weekdays from 9:00am to 5:00pm at our location on 175 Green Street in Albany.
- Sunday, January 10th from 1pm to 4pm at the Colonie Central High School gymnasium located at 1 Raider Blvd. in Albany.
- Wednesday, January 20th from 3:30pm to 7pm at the Guilderland Central High School cafeteria located at 8 School Rd. in Guilderland Center.

These clinics are by appointment only for Albany County residents who are 6 months of age or older. Albany County residents can pre-register for an appointment either online at www.albanycounty.com/health or by phone at (518) 447-4505. Phones are open weekdays 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

For updated information regarding future public clinics, please continue to check our website at www.albanycounty.com/health.

In addition to our public vaccination clinics, you may be able to get the H1N1 vaccine at your doctor's office, as many providers continue to offer the H1N1 vaccine to their patients. In addition, a number of pharmacies throughout the county are now offering the vaccine for a modest administration fee. Check www.flu.gov and click on "Where You Live" to see if vaccine clinics are scheduled at retail outlets near you.

FLU SURVEILLANCE

Albany County Influenza Surveillance – Key Findings:

- » Flu activity continues to decrease in New York State and Albany County
- » Last week, sentinel influenza physicians in NYS reported ILI activity at 1.40%, which is below the baseline ILI activity level of 2.3% normally seen at this time of year.
- » All specimens tested at Wadsworth state lab last week were positive for 2009 H1N1. Seasonal influenza continues to remain at very low levels so far this season.
- » Nationally, 4 states are reporting widespread influenza activity. Regional influenza activity was reported by 13 states, including New York State. Local influenza activity was reported by 19 states, 13 states reported sporadic influenza activity, and one state reported no influenza activity. Additional information about flu surveillance in the U.S. is available from the CDC website FluView at www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/.

If you would like to subscribe to or be removed from this list please e-mail BeReady@AlbanyCounty.com and insert "Remove from Weekly Update" in subject line.

More resources for more information about seasonal flu and H1N1 flu:

The Albany County Department of Health
www.albanycounty.com/health

Call Albany County's 24-hour automated flu hotline at (518) 447-4505

The New York State Department of Health H1N1 flu hotline at 1-800-808-1987

www.flu.gov