

DeKalb County Health Department

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From: Karen Grush Public Health Administrator



Public Health
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Official Reminds Public That H1N1 is Still a Threat

The DeKalb County Health Department continues to offer H1N1 flu vaccination clinic appointments. Residents interested in obtaining an H1N1 flu vaccination can call the toll free appointment line at 1-888-726-2412. There is no charge for the H1N1 flu vaccine. Residents can also check the H1N1 link of the Health Department website at www.dekalbcountyhealthdepartment.org.

“While some perceive that H1N1 is no longer a health threat, we would like to remind the public that getting a vaccination is still very important,” said the Health Department’s Public Health Administrator Karen Grush. “The number of cases of H1N1 has dropped in many areas across the country, however, health experts are concerned that this may just be a temporary lull in the number of cases, especially with four months still to go in the flu season. We don’t know what the future will hold. The best way to protect yourself against H1N1 is to get an H1N1 vaccination.”

Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota Center for Infectious Disease Research, reported there could be a third wave in the upcoming months. It is estimated in the United States, at least half the population is still vulnerable to the disease because they have not been vaccinated or weren’t infected in the first two waves. Dr. Osterholm also stated that H1N1 has been much more selective hitting younger populations and it is causing the kinds of illness we haven’t seen before.

Dr. Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reported that for children and young adults, the rate of death from H1N1 is at least five times higher than from a usual flu season. He reiterated that sadly, there have been nearly 10,000 deaths, including 1,100 among children under the age of 18.

In addition to the Health Department’s clinic, vaccine is available at a number of pharmacies in DeKalb County. For more information, visit: http://www.idph.state.il.us/h1n1_flu/sf_vaccine.htm. Vaccine is also available through many local health care providers. Anyone, six months of age and older, is eligible to receive the vaccine at this time.

“The more people who get vaccinated, the more people will be protected from influenza, the less likely we will have a third wave in the weeks and months to come,” said Grush.

In recognition of National Influenza Vaccination Week, Jan. 10 - 16, the Health Department is reminding residents to follow these steps to stay healthy:

- Get the H1N1 vaccination
- Wash your hands frequently
- Cover your mouth if you cough or sneeze
- Stay home if you're sick
- Go to reliable resources for updates, such as:
www.dekalbcountyhealthdepartment.org, www.ready.illinois.gov, or
www.flu.gov.
- Help your children learn healthy habits for keeping them well. Make it a family priority.

National Influenza Vaccination Week was designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to raise awareness of the importance of vaccination and the fact that vaccination is available and effective beyond October and November.