

Fall 2003

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# Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

## THE PUBLIC HEALTH PRESS

Health Protection \* Disease Prevention \* Health Education



~ An Active Member of the Dickinson-Iron County Collaborative Boards~

### Our Mission

*“To assure the highest possible level of health for the people of the communities we serve.”*

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## Vaccination: Not Just for Children

Richard J. Thoun, RS, MPH, Director/Health Officer

Most adults ensure that their children are vaccinated against childhood diseases, but many neglect to get their own immunizations. Even those who are well informed about health do not seem to know that adults, too, need vaccines. Nearly 50,000 adults die in America each year from vaccine-preventable diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that these illnesses cost society \$10 billion a year. Reaching adults with vaccines takes creative thinking, but it can be done, as has been shown by France and other countries with effective adult vaccination programs.

While all children need basic immunizations, adults have more varied needs, an obstacle to getting out the vaccine message. People over 50 and anyone with chronic heart, lung or kidney problems should get annual flu vaccinations. Locally, residents of Dickinson and Iron Counties have been very supportive of influenza vaccination efforts. An estimated 68% of residents 65 years and older received the vaccine in 2002. But in 2001 only a quarter of adults from 18 to 64 years with a specific risk of flu were vaccinated. In 2001, 10 deaths due to pneumonia or influenza occurred in our health district, six in Dickinson County and four in Iron County. Ninety percent of these deaths occurred to people 75 years of age and older. The overall death rate in our district of 25 deaths per 10,000 population is higher than both the Michigan rate (21) and the U.S. rate (24). Deaths from pneumonia or influenza combined is the 7<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death for residents in our counties.

People 65 and older and those with special health problems should be vaccinated against pneumococcal disease - the most common cause of pneumonia, accounting for some 175,000 hospitalizations each year. An estimated 63% of Dickinson and Iron residents 65 and older with special health problems ever reported having had the vaccine in 2002. The most recent data for Dickinson and Iron Counties indicates that there were 236 hospital admissions for bacterial pneumonia. Some of these cases could likely have been prevented with the pneumococcal vaccine.

In addition, a vaccine can protect against hepatitis B, which is transmitted through sex and shared needles and kills 5,000 adults a year in the United States. Adults should also get a tetanus booster every 10 years. Certain people should be vaccinated against hepatitis A, chickenpox, diphtheria, measles, mumps and rubella. All of these vaccines are available through your Health Department. In the next few years vaccines are likely to become available against the herpes virus and the human papillomavirus - the world's most prevalent sexually transmitted infection and the leading cause of cervical cancer.

(Continued on page 3)

## Dickinson-Iron District Health Department On-Site Flu Vaccination Clinic

*Denise Berland, Office Supervisor*

Influenza is not just a runny nose or upset stomach. It is serious business. Influenza is an extremely contagious respiratory disease caused by infection with either Type A or Type B influenza virus. These viruses can be spread via sneezing, coughing, or by touching contaminated objects. When you get the flu, typically you have fever, a cough, head and muscle aches, fatigue and a sore throat. You can expect to be sick from five to ten days.

The direct and indirect costs of influenza to businesses and the health care system is significant when calculating the direct costs of days lost with other indirect costs. An average of 1.5 million workdays are lost each year and the estimated cost overall, which includes healthcare and loss of productivity, is approximately \$1 billion.

Each year, an estimated 10 to 20% of the population contracts influenza. The result is an increase in the number of work place absences due to influenza, which affects the bottom line for businesses. Studies have shown that workers who receive the influenza vaccine have lower absenteeism rates and lower medical costs associated with influenza-like illness. Another study showed that medical claims for those who did not receive the vaccine rose by \$496.

Every year the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department conducts **On-Site Flu Vaccination Clinics** for various businesses and agencies. One of our largest business participants states that the benefits far outweigh the costs of providing the flu vaccination for their employees. They estimate a savings of approximately \$125 per vaccinated employee.

To help protect workers and the bottom line, employers can invest in workplace influenza immunization programs. Influenza vaccination provides a 70-90% protection level against true influenza and reduces the severity of the disease. The vaccine starts to provide protection approximately 1-2 weeks after the vaccination is given and continues throughout the flu season (November – April). The flu season typically peaks in our area around January to February. Since the influenza vaccine contains only non-infectious viruses, “dead viruses,” it cannot cause influenza.

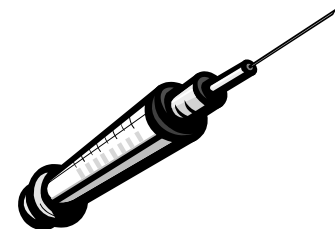
The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department, as a part of our commitment to providing effective public health management solutions, offers **On-Site Flu Vaccination Clinics** to businesses and agencies with a minimum of 10 flu vaccine recipients. Businesses have the option to be billed for the service or the Health Department will collect fees from each employee who chooses to receive the influenza vaccine.

The Health Department **On-Site Flu Vaccination Clinic** provides the following benefits to you and your employees:

- Reduces direct and indirect costs associated with flu-related lost time
- Promotes a flu-free and productive workforce
- Provides ease of access to flu vaccinations thereby saving businesses and employees time and money
- Communicates the message to employees that they are valued by their employer and that their health is a priority

**On-Site Flu Vaccination Clinics** are staffed by Health Department nurses and support staff and provide the following services:

- Provide educational materials to employees
- Perform the vaccinations
- Ensure each participant is comfortable with the protocols
- Confirm emergency systems are in place
- Provide influenza Information Sheet
- Review the Employee Vaccination Questionnaire
- Obtain written employee consent
- Collect fee from each employee (or bill the business for service)
- Manage all aspects of the **On-Site Flu Vaccination Clinic**



The Fall 2003 influenza season is fast approaching. To schedule an influenza vaccination clinic for your staff, contact Denise Berland at the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department (906) 779-7210.

## Vaccination: Not Just for Children *(Cont. from front page)*

Children benefit from a good vaccine structure. Pediatricians inform parents about vaccines and are equipped to administer them. Schools and day care centers require proof of immunization. In most cases, an insurance company or the government pays for vaccines. Many states, including Michigan, have a computerized registry to track immunizations. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department and many local health care providers enter immunizations into Michigan's registry on a daily basis.

Adults have none of these advantages. They tend to see doctors only when they are sick, and those doctors are often specialists who rarely mention vaccines. Despite the fact that adult vaccines are extremely cost-effective, Medicare and insurance coverage is spotty. Adults are often unsure of which shots they have had.

As children's vaccine coverage has improved, money has become available in the last five years to create a better system for adult vaccinations. But it has a long way to go. The hepatitis B vaccine should be available in prisons, at college health clinics and at sexually transmitted disease clinics. All doctors' offices and hospitals should provide information about adult vaccines, and clinics and doctors who see patients on a regular basis, like gynecologists, urologists and cardiologists, should offer vaccines. State registries for children could be expanded to allow adults to keep track of their own immunization histories online. Michigan is considering expanding its registry to include adults. It is worth investing in ways to promote a basic, cost-effective health measure that not only helps protect adults, but also everyone in their households.

The Health Department is currently planning and preparing for the annual fall influenza and pneumococcal immunization campaign. Local residents, particularly those with underlying chronic diseases and other medical conditions that place them at increased risk, are encouraged to take advantage of both community based and office scheduled clinics this fall.

Because influenza vaccination is also a cost effective preventive measure in the workplace, we also encourage local businesses to consider offering the vaccine to their employees. The department can schedule an on-site clinic at your work location with a minimum of 10 interested employees.

Contact Denise Berland at 779-7210 for further information and to schedule a clinic.

*Source: Portions excerpted from the New York Times, Wednesday, July 9, 2003*

## October 2003 National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and National Mammography Day

*Pam Bartelli, BCCCP Coordinator*

The third Friday in October each year is National Mammography Day, first proclaimed by President Clinton in 1993. On this day, or throughout the month, several radiologists provide discounted or free screening mammograms. In 2002, more than 680 American College of Radiology (ACR) accredited facilities took part in this event. This year, National Mammography Day will be celebrated on October 17.

Iron County General Hospital and Dickinson County Healthcare System continue with their generous contribution to the women of our community by their participation in the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program, administered through the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department.

The Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program offers FREE mammograms and pap smears to eligible women between the ages of 40 to 64 who are uninsured/underinsured and meet the following income guidelines:

Size of Family Unit	Maximum Income Per Year
1	\$22,450
2	\$30,300
3	\$38,150
4	\$46,000
Each Add'l Member Add:	\$7,850

For additional information or to schedule an appointment, please contact the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at:

**Dickinson County at 779-7237**

or

**Iron County at 265-4162.**

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See us at:  
[www.didhd.org](http://www.didhd.org)

## ACE Students to Participate in Prevention Training

This fall on September 4<sup>th</sup>, Network Prevention from downstate will be conducting a training at ACE High School in Iron River.

This training will focus on environmental approaches for limiting youth access to tobacco, and several projects occurring in Michigan will be showcased during the training.

The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department recently received a small grant from the Community Alliance Foundation of

the Upper Peninsula to help support this workshop and provide funding for youth driven projects to take place within the local community.

A small select group from the Healthy Youth Coalition membership has been invited to participate and share in the training.

The training is for both youth and adults and encourages partnerships between the two in implementing and executing local

related projects.

Anyone who may be interested in participating in the Network Prevention training and working with youth is asked to contact Kelly Rumpf at the Health Department at 779-7234.



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Health Educator

*Public Health: "We don't diagnose preventable disease, we immunize you against them."*