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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Wide Flu Clinic in Dickinson and Iron County

Kingsford, Michigan – September 24, 2007. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department announced today plans to conduct community-wide influenza (flu) immunization clinics.

In Iron County the influenza clinic will be held in conjunction with the Iron County Community Hospital Health Fair on Thursday, October 25, 2007 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Elks Lodge in Iron River. Appointments are required and can be scheduled beginning Tuesday, October 9th, by calling (906) 265-4150.

In Dickinson County a community-wide influenza clinic will be held on Saturday, October 27, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Kingsford Middle School. Wisconsin residents are also welcome at this clinic. Appointments are required and can be scheduled beginning Thursday, October 11th by calling (906) 779-7207.

After October 27th, additional clinics may be held at the Health Department offices depending on the availability of vaccine.

Influenza vaccination can be given to people 6 months of age and older. It is recommended for people who are at risk of complications from influenza, and for people who can spread influenza to those at high risk (including all household members):

People at high risk for complications from influenza:

- Anyone 50 year of age or older;
- All children 6 months up to 5 years of age;
- Women who will be pregnant during influenza season
- People 6 months to 18 years of age on long-term aspirin treatment.
- Residents of long-term care facilities housing persons with chronic medical conditions.

- People who have long-term health problems with:
 - heart disease – kidney disease – metabolic disease, such as diabetes
 - lung disease – Asthma – anemia, and other blood disorders
- People with a weakened immune system due to:
 - HIV/AIDS or another disease that affects the immune system
 - long-term treatment with drugs such as steroids
 - cancer treatment with x-rays or drugs
- People with certain muscle or nerve disorders (such as seizure disorders or severe cerebral palsy) that can lead to breathing or swallowing problems.

People who can spread influenza to those at high risk:

- Household contacts and out-of-home caretakers of children from birth up to 5 years of age.
- Health care providers;
- Household contacts and caregivers of people 50 years and older, and those with medical conditions that put them at higher risk for severe complications from influenza.

Influenza vaccinations are also recommended for

- Anyone else who wants to reduce their chance of getting influenza.

A yearly influenza vaccination should be considered for:

- People who provide essential community services.
- People living in dormitories or under other crowded conditions, to prevent outbreaks.
- People at high risk for flu complications who travel to the Southern hemisphere between April and September, or who travel to the tropics or in organized tourist groups at any time.

The flu immunization is a covered benefit for Medicare part B and Michigan Medicaid recipients. If you have private health insurance that covers the flu immunization, the Health Department may bill your health insurance. For all others the charge is \$30 for adults and \$13-\$30 for children 6 months – 18 years of age.

The pneumococcal immunization will also be available and is a Medicare Part B benefit. If you do not have Medicare Part B the charge is \$46.

Flu (influenza) is a serious disease. It is caused by a virus that spreads from infected persons to the nose or throat of others. The flu season in our local area is usually around January or February. Vaccine will begin to provide its protective effect after about one to two

weeks and immunity may decrease, on average, after several months. Flu can cause fever, cough, chills, sore throat, headache and muscle aches.

This year's flu vaccine contains the strains of flu which have been circulating in the past year and are most likely to occur in the United States this winter. Immunity produced by the flu immunization decreases in the year after vaccination. A flu immunization should be received each year. All viruses in the vaccine are killed so they cannot infect anyone. Flu immunizations will not protect all persons who use them against the flu, nor protect against other illnesses that resemble the flu.

Pneumococcal disease is a serious disease that causes much sickness and death. Pneumococcal disease can lead to serious infections of the lungs (pneumonia), the blood (bacteremia), and the covering of the brain (meningitis). Anyone can get pneumococcal disease. However, some people are at greater risk from the disease. These include people 65 and older, the very young, and people with special health problems such as alcoholism, heart or lung disease, kidney failure, diabetes, HIV infection, or certain types of cancer. Otherwise healthy children who often get ear infections, sinus infections, or other upper respiratory diseases do not need to get the pneumococcal vaccination because of these conditions.

Usually one dose of pneumococcal vaccine is needed. However, under certain circumstances a second dose may be given.

Persons who are in the high risk category due to an illness should consult with their physician prior to receiving the pneumococcal vaccine.

Additional information about influenza is available through the Health Department's web site at www.didhd.org.

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