FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Health Department Announces Flu Clinics

Kingsford, Michigan – September 3, 2015. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department (DIDHD) announces plans to conduct the following community influenza (flu) immunization clinics.

Every Monday evening in October a flu clinic will be held at each Health Department from 3:30-6:00 p.m.

In addition, in Dickinson County, a clinic will be held at the Health Department on Monday, September 28th from 3:30 – 6:00 p.m.

In Iron County a clinic will be held in conjunction with the Aspirus/Northstar Health System Health Fair at the Windsor Center in Iron River on Tuesday, October 6 from 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Additional community clinics will be held at the following locations:

- Crystal Falls Senior Center  September 30  1 – 3 p.m.
- Sagola Senior Center  October 8  1:30 – 2 p.m.
- Norway School  October 15  3 – 5 p.m.
- WIC School  October 15  3 – 5 p.m.
- North Dickinson School  October 16  3:30 – 5 p.m.
- Forest Park School  October 22  3 – 5 p.m.

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Health officials state it is very important to receive the seasonal flu vaccine. Flu is a contagious disease. It is caused by the influenza virus, which can be spread by coughing, sneezing, or nasal secretions. Infants, the elderly, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions – such as heart, lung or kidney disease or a weakened immune system – are at higher risk for complication from the flu virus. Flu can cause high fever and pneumonia, and make existing medical conditions worse. Each year thousands of people die from seasonal flu and even more require hospitalization. The single best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against the flu is to get vaccinated each year. It is recommended that everyone 6 months of age and older receive a flu vaccine.

The Health Department also encourages new parents, health care professionals, and those who have contact with people age 65 and older to get vaccinated to help protect these high-risk individuals.

The pneumococcal immunizations will also be available at these clinics. The Health Department would like to remind senior citizens that in the fall of 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began recommending pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) for adults 65 years or older. Most seniors may have received the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23), but now should also be immunized with the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13). Senior citizens are encouraged to review their immunization record to be sure they are fully protected against pneumococcal disease.

Pneumococcal disease is an infection caused by Streptococcus pneumoniae bacteria, also known as pneumococcus. Pneumococcal bacteria can cause many types of illnesses that range from mild to very severe. When pneumococcal bacteria spread from the nose and throat to ears or sinuses, it generally causes mild infections. When the bacteria spread into other parts of the body, it can lead to severe health problems such pneumonia, bacteremia, and meningitis. These illnesses can be life threatening, especially for adults 65 years or older, people with chronic health conditions, and people who are immunocompromised. Pneumococcal disease can lead to disabilities like deafness, brain damage, or loss of arms or legs.

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Pneumococcal bacteria spread from person-to-person by direct contact with respiratory secretions, like saliva or mucus. People can carry the bacteria in their nose and throat, and can spread the bacteria without feeling sick.

Each year in the United States, pneumococcal disease kills thousands of adults, including 18,000 adults 65 years or older. Thousands more end up in the hospital because of pneumococcal disease. The best way to prevent pneumococcal disease is by getting vaccinated with these two vaccines: Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV13) and Pneumococcal polysaccharide (PPSV23).

PCV13 protects against 13 strains of pneumococcus bacteria and PPSV23 protects against 23 strains of pneumococcus bacteria. Both vaccines provide protection against illnesses like meningitis, bacteremia and pneumonia. These vaccines are safe, but side effects can occur. Most side effects are mild or moderate, such as arm swelling or soreness, and do not affect daily activities.

The flu and pneumococcal vaccines are billable to Medicare Part B. The flu vaccine is billable to Michigan Medicaid and most private health insurance plans. Please call the Health Department at 774-1868 or 265-9913 for more information or to pre-register for a community clinic.

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