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For Immediate Release

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Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones This Holiday Season. Get Your Flu Vaccination!

Kingsford, Michigan – December 13, 2005. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department reported today that Michigan is currently reporting sporadic influenza disease activity. Influenza activity does not appear to have peaked yet and could still continue for several months. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the best way to protect yourself, your family and friends is to get your influenza vaccination. About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies that provide protection against influenza virus infection develop in the body. The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is offering the flu vaccination throughout the flu season while the vaccine supply is available.

Influenza (“the flu”) kills about 36,000 people in the United States each year. The flu vaccination is the main way to prevent this potentially deadly disease and its complications. Some people who get flu develop serious complications. These include pneumonia, swelling of the brain, heart inflammation, and worsened respiratory conditions-sometimes leading to hospitalization and even death.

Flu can kill, and it can spread easily. In most people, flu is contagious for up to 2 days before the onset of symptoms, until about 5 days after they begin. That means flu has 7 days to spread to anyone with whom the infected person comes into contact-including you!

The most common symptoms of flu are fever; muscle aches; severe headache; extreme tiredness, weakness, or exhaustion; cough; sore throat; and runny nose.

-More-

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends flu vaccinations for:

- Children 6-23 months of age;
- Persons who are 50 years of age or older;
- Persons with a chronic disease;
- People who live with, or take care of, infants or anyone in a group listed above;
- Any child or teenager receiving long-term aspirin therapy;
- Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season;
- Health-care and emergency workers; and
- Everyone who wants to reduce their likelihood of becoming ill with flu.

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 will bill your health insurance. For all others the charge is \$30 for adults and \$12-\$25 for children 6 months – 18 years of age.

To protect your family, call the Health Department at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913 to make an appointment for your flu vaccination. By preparing now, you and your loved ones can be ready for influenza – before it strikes!

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