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News Release

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Immediate Release

It's Not too Late to Vaccinate – Get Your Flu Vaccine Today!

Kingsford, Michigan – December 2, 2013. In recognition of National Influenza Vaccination Week, December 8-14, 2013 the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department is taking this opportunity to tell the community how important it is to get an annual influenza vaccination.

After November when you see signs that advertise: "Get Your Flu Vaccine Here," you might think, "Isn't it too late for that?" The answer is no, it's not too late! "Flu season typically peaks in February and can last as late as May," says Joyce Ziegler, RNC, Community Health Services Director at the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department. "We are encouraging people who have not yet been vaccinated this season to get vaccinated now."

For millions of people every season, the flu can mean a fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, fatigue, and miserable days spent in bed. However, you may not realize that more than 200,000 people are hospitalized in the United States from flu complications each year. The flu also can be deadly: Over a period of 30 years, between 1976 and 2006, estimates of yearly flu-associated deaths in the United States range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people during the most severe season.

This is why the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends an annual flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older. It's available as a shot and as a nasal spray.

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Anyone can get the flu, but some people are at greater risk for serious flu-related complications, like pneumonia, that can lead to hospitalization and even death. For those at greater risk for complications, getting the flu vaccine is especially important. People at greater risk include, but are not limited to:

- Children younger than 5 years old, and especially children younger than 2 years old
- Pregnant women
- People 65 years and older
- People with certain medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, or heart and lung disease

Ask your doctor if you are uncertain whether you or your family are at a greater risk for flu complications. It's also important to get the vaccine if you care for anyone at high risk, including babies younger than 6 months because they are too young to get the vaccine.

Children 6 months through 8 years of age who are getting vaccinated for the first time need two doses of flu vaccine to be fully protected. If a child has not received his/her first dose, get them vaccinated now. For children who are 6 months through 8 years of age and who have been vaccinated with one dose, parents should check with the child's doctor to see if a second dose is needed.

"Getting the flu vaccine is simple, and it's the most important thing you can do to protect yourself and your family from the flu," says Ziegler. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, missed work due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations and deaths. Millions of people have safely received flu vaccines for decades.

For more information about influenza and the influenza vaccination visit www.cdc.gov/flu. For an appointment for the influenza vaccination contact your healthcare provider or the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at (906)774-1868 or (906)265-9913.

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