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Vaccine to Prevent Shingles Recommended for Persons Age 60 and Older Grant Vaccine Available

Kingsford, Michigan, October 2, 2008 - The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department has received a grant to provide a limited number of free zoster vaccine doses for persons age 60 and older. The cost is \$13.00 for the administration fee (the vaccine is free). For more information or to make an appointment for this vaccination, call the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that people age 60 and older receive a new vaccine to prevent herpes zoster, or shingles, a condition that often leads to debilitating chronic pain.

The ACIP recommends the newly licensed zoster vaccine, Zostavax manufactured by Merck, to protect against shingles be given to all people age 60 and older, including those who have had a previous episode of shingles. The vaccine is given in one dose and is available at the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department.

"Vaccines aren't just for kids anymore and this vaccine represents an important medical breakthrough aimed at improving health in older adults," said Dr. Anne Schuchat, director of CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. "These vaccine recommendations address a health problem for people age 60 and older. It has been tested and has been found to be safe and effective in providing protection against shingles and associated chronic pain." In clinical trials, the vaccine prevented shingles in about half of people 60 years of age and older. It also reduced post herpetic neuralgia (pain persisting after an episode of shingles) by 67 percent.

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