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Immediate Release

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“Shingles” Vaccine Grant Expanded to Income Eligible Medicare Recipients

Kingsford, Michigan, August 14, 2007 - The Dickinson-Iron District Health Department has recently received a grant to provide a limited number of Zostavax (shingles) vaccine doses for income eligible persons age 60 and older. The charge would be \$13 to administer this vaccine.

Due to the limited number of private providers that offer the Zostavax vaccine to Medicare recipients, this grant has been expanded to include income eligible Medicare recipients.

Medicare recipients that are not income eligible for the Zostavax grant vaccine may also receive the vaccine from the Health Department, but at the private pay charge of \$175 per dose (administration and vaccine fee). The Health Department is not a Medicare Part B or Part D provider, and is unable to bill the administration or vaccine fee to Medicare.

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

“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.

For more information or to make an appointment for this vaccination, call your health care provider or the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913.

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