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NEWS RELEASE

To: All Media
From: Terry Frankovich, M.D., M.P.H., Medical Director
Debbie Horton, R.N., B.S. N., (906-779-7211)
Date: September 26, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flu Season is Fast Approaching

The kids are back in school, the leaves are starting to turn and the Dickinson –Iron District Health Department wants to remind you that now is the perfect time to think about getting seasonal flu shots for you and your family.

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. It can cause mild to severe illness with symptoms like fever, body aches, sore throat, congestion and cough. Every year there are thousands of deaths in the U.S. related to influenza. And, while anyone can get the flu, older people, young children, and those with certain health conditions are at higher risk for serious flu complications. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated each year.

According to Dr. Terry Frankovich, Medical Director for Dickinson-Iron District Health Department, “It takes about two weeks to develop protective antibodies against influenza after you are vaccinated, so it is important to get your flu shot before the virus begins to circulate in your community or communities you visit. Flu season can arrive as early as October, so it is best to get vaccinated when vaccine becomes available in late summer or early fall.” Dr. Frankovich does note however that with flu season often extending well into the spring, it is almost never too late to get vaccinated.

The 2018-2019 flu vaccines will protect against three or four strains of influenza, depending upon the formulation you receive. In addition to a variety of injectable vaccines, the nasal flu vaccine will be available this year. It can be used in healthy individuals from 2 years through 49 years. The high dose flu shot is also available and may help seniors mount a more robust response to vaccination. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), any age-appropriate flu vaccine can be used, so you do not need to delay vaccination to obtain one particular formulation.

Annual vaccination is recommended for people aged 6 months and older, especially members of the following high risk groups:

- Children younger than 5 years but especially children under two years;
- People aged 65 years and older;
- Those who have chronic lung (including asthma), heart, kidney or liver disease and those with neurologic, blood, or metabolic diseases (like diabetes mellitus).

- People who are immune-suppressed
- Women who are or will be pregnant during the influenza season;

Other high risk groups include children on long-term aspirin therapy, nursing home residents, Native Americans, very obese individuals and healthcare workers. Vaccination is also recommended for household contacts and caregivers of high risk individuals.

Flu vaccine is widely available this year, from physicians, hospitals and clinics; some retail pharmacies; and at the following health department-sponsored clinics:

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| • Bay College- West Campus | October 1 | 2 – 7 p.m. |
| • West Iron County School | October 2 | 2:45 – 3:45 p.m. |
| • Norway School | October 3 | 3 – 5 p.m. |
| • Windsor Center | October 3 | 9 – 2 p.m. |
| • North Dickinson School | October 4 | 3:30 – 5 p.m. |
| • DC & IC Health Department | October 8 | 2 – 6 p.m. |
| • DC & IC Health Department | October 15 | 2 – 6 p.m. |
| • Crystal Falls Community Center | October 16 | 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. |
| • Senior Center-Sagola | October 16 | 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. |
| • Econo Foods | October 17 | 8:30 – 11 a.m. |
| • Forest Park School | October 23 | 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. |

All health department clinics offer walk-in vaccination without appointment, and curbside service for those who have problems with mobility. Medicare Part B, Medicare Part D, Michigan Medicaid, Healthy Kids, and MI Child are accepted with current cards, as well as cash or check for \$35.

For more information, call the health department office in your county, or visit www.didhd.org or cdc.gov/flu. Dickinson-Iron District Health Department encourages area residents to protect themselves, their families and their community this year by getting vaccinated. Vaccination saves lives!

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