

District Health Department #10

Serving the counties of: Crawford, Kalkaska, Lake, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Newaygo, Oceana, and Wexford Counties
www.dhd10.org

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jennifer Hansen, M.A.

Phone: 231-316-8554

Date: April 9, 2010

E-mail: jhansen@dhd10.org

H1N1 Flu Still a Concern

A recent spike in H1N1 flu in Georgia has officials concerned about the ongoing impact of the virus. Hospital admissions from H1N1 are up in Georgia this past month and several other states are seeing either regional or local flu activity. Although the rise in cases is primarily occurring in the Southeastern states, the spread of the virus is unpredictable. Georgia has one of the lowest H1N1 vaccine rates in the county, which may be contributing to the rise in cases there. Health officials are encouraging people of all ages in all states to get vaccinated to protect them against potential waves of flu activity.

Although many areas of the country aren't seeing high flu activity currently, that doesn't mean the threat is over. Dr. James Wilson, Medical Director at District Health Department #10 advises the public to be cautious about the continued risk of infection. "I think we must be very vigilant about the changes in the flu virus and be watchful for a possible third wave of influenza this year. It is not too late for vaccination. Getting the H1N1 vaccine this year will give you a head start on getting a boost to your immune system for flu seasons to come".

The impact of flu on the individual varies from minor symptoms to those requiring hospitalization. The CDC predicts that only 1 of every 6 Americans has gotten sick with H1N1. Of the 60 million infected, 265,000 have needed inpatient care and nearly 12,000 have died. Unlike seasonal flu, which is more often fatal to those over 65, the H1N1 strain is affecting younger people. The death rate in this age group is five times that of seasonal flu.

H1N1 vaccine is now widely available, easy to access and free. District Health Department #10 and many local health care providers are currently providing it to people of all ages. There is no way to predict future timing of the spread or severity of this virus. Vaccination continues to be the single best way to protect yourself and those around you from infection from the flu.