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NEWS RELEASE

TO: Area Media Outlets

FROM: Dominic Smith
Bay County Health Department Public Information Officer

DATE: October 23, 2009

RE: **H1N1 Vaccine**

RUN: Immediate Release

Bay County Health Department's (BCHD) 2009 H1N1 vaccination program has begun, but initial supplies are very limited. More doses are expected for shipment each week; however, it is unknown how much vaccine the Health Department will receive weekly. We ask members of the public who want to receive this vaccine to be patient. The vaccine program is a massive and challenging undertaking. There will likely be bumps along the way, but we are optimistic that we will achieve our goal of making the 2009 H1N1 vaccine available to all those who need and want it. As soon as the 2009 H1N1 Influenza vaccine becomes available for wider distribution, the public will be notified.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended that certain groups of the population receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available. These target groups include:

- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
- Pregnant women
- People who live or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old, and
- People ages 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk for H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems

The national vaccine program is voluntary. Those interested in vaccination for themselves or their children will receive accurate information about 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine and the vaccine's benefits and risks so they can make an informed decision.

Residents will be able to obtain the H1N1 influenza vaccine through a combination of settings, such as community-based vaccination clinics organized by the BCHD, healthcare provider offices, and private settings, such as pharmacies. If you are interested in obtaining the nasal form of the H1N1 vaccine, contact your family

physician to determine if they plan to administer this form of the vaccine. The BCHD, along with other community partners, will administer the injectable form of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine. There will be no charge for the 2009 H1N1 vaccine; however, there may be a fee for the administration of the vaccine.

There has been very little H1N1 illness in people 65 and older since the 2009 H1N1 virus emerged. Studies of who is most likely to be infected with 2009 H1N1 show that people 65 and older are the *least likely* to get sick with the virus. While people 65 and older aren't considered in the high risk groups for 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccination, they will be able to receive the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine as soon as the target groups have had the opportunity to be vaccinated. People age 65 and older remain at increased risk for complications from **seasonal influenza** compared to younger people and are recommended for annual **seasonal flu vaccine**.

Residents are currently able to receive **seasonal influenza vaccine** from the Bay County Health Department; however, the seasonal flu vaccine is in limited supply, as well. Please contact the Bay County Health Department's Immunization Clinic at (989) 895-4009 Ext. 2 for seasonal flu shot availability information.

For more information about H1N1 and seasonal flu, visit the Bay County Health Department's webpage at www.baycounty-mi.gov/Health.

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