



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 27, 2012

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Residents Encouraged to Get Flu Shot as Cases Rise Early in Michigan

LANSING – Within the past week, two influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported in Michigan. These deaths are a somber reminder of the danger flu poses to children. The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get a seasonal flu vaccine each year.

One death was in a 6 month old from southwest Michigan and the second death was in a 13 year old from the central region of the state. Nationally, eight influenza-associated pediatric deaths have been reported. Children less than 6 months of age cannot get a flu vaccine. The best way to protect infants from the flu is to vaccinate those around them, including parents, siblings, grandparents, day and child care workers, and health care personnel.

“While it’s too early to tell how severe our season might be, there’s no doubt that we’ve seen more cases already this year than we typically do,” said James K. Haveman, Director of the MDCH. “Hundreds of thousands of people are hospitalized with flu each year. Vaccination is the single most important step we can take to protect ourselves and our families against infection. It’s not too late to get vaccinated before Michigan’s flu season peaks.”

Some children 6 months through 8 years of age require two doses of influenza vaccine. The second dose should be given at least 28 days after the first dose. Your child’s health care provider can use Michigan’s Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) to tell you whether two doses are recommended for your child. MCIR can be used by your doctor, local health department, pharmacy or other health care provider to keep track of the vaccines you’ve received and those you need.

In addition to the two flu-associated pediatric deaths in Michigan, there have been 149 positive influenza cases confirmed at the MDCH Bureau of Laboratories (BOL). This number does not represent all the influenza cases diagnosed and reported in Michigan, as additional cases have been confirmed at laboratories throughout the state. During the last flu season, there were four positive cases reported to MDCH’s BOL at this time; however, last year we experienced a relatively late and mild flu season.

Vaccination should be occurring now and continue throughout the entire flu season and there is an ample supply of flu vaccine available. Citizens can call their physician, local health department, or utilize the Health Map Vaccine Finder at <http://flushot.healthmap.org> to find nearby influenza vaccination clinics. For more information about the flu, visit www.michigan.gov/flu.

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