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News Release NEWS RELEASE

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Don't Let the Flu Get to You

National Influenza Vaccination Week is perfect time to get vaccinated, urges American Red Cross

[LANSING] January 11, 2010 — The H1N1 (swine) flu virus is still prevalent across the nation and the American Red Cross encourages everyone to get vaccinated against the virus, now that the vaccine is widely available.

National Influenza Vaccination Week, which is January 10-16, serves as an opportunity for people to learn how to prevent the spread of the flu and to encourage people and their loved ones to get vaccinated against both H1N1 and seasonal flu. To find out where vaccinations are offered in the Lansing area, visit flu.gov.

“The H1N1 flu continues to be a health threat, so this is no time to be complacent,” said Sharon Stanley, chief nurse and director, Red Cross Disaster Health and Mental Health Services. “The supply for the vaccine is no longer an issue, and we don’t know whether another wave of H1N1 will occur. The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones is by being vaccinated.”

In the fall of 2009, the supply of H1N1 vaccine was limited, but now the vaccine is readily available. The vaccine was developed in the same manner as the seasonal flu vaccine, manufactured using the same standards and quality control measures and is considered safe.

Even though the number of people getting the flu is decreasing, the H1N1 virus is still a threat. In the past, seasonal flu usually peaked in January or February and occurred as late as May. Officials for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention caution that they still don’t know what seasonal flu outbreaks will be like this year, and if there will be additional waves of H1N1.

Besides vaccination, there are also other simple steps to take to help prevent the spread of the flu:

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve – cough into the elbow area, not hands.
- Wash hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are effective.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if sick.

The Red Cross has [educational tools available](#) to help households, schools and workplaces be well-informed and promote healthy habits that help reduce the spread of the flu. Visit RedCross.org or www.MidMichiganRedCross.org for more information.

About the American Red Cross:

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides emotional support to victims of disasters; supplies nearly half of the nation's blood; teaches lifesaving skills; provides international humanitarian aid; and supports military members and their families. The Red Cross is a charitable organization — not a government agency — and depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission. For more information, please visit www.redcross.org or join our blog at <http://blog.redcross.org>.