

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

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Steve Todd, Health Officer

517-279-9561, ext. 0148#

Kim Wilhelm, Prevention Services Director

517-279-9561, ext. 0144#

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exercise Your Right to Bear Arms and Get Your Flu Shot!

(Coldwater, MI) Election Day is fast approaching. The news channels are flooded with political ads from candidates who are focused on your rights... the right to fair taxation, the right to freedom of speech and right to vote for the candidate of your choice. The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency wants to remind you that you have another right. You have the right to bear arms... and get your flu shot!

According to Steve Todd, Health Officer for the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency, "Bearing your arm to get a flu shot is an important right that you can exercise today and will provide you with protection against the seasonal flu for up to a year. Not only is getting the flu shot a right that you can exercise – it's the right thing to do!"

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends an annual flu vaccination for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. While there are many different flu viruses, the seasonal flu vaccine is designed to protect against the main flu viruses that research suggests will cause the most illness during the upcoming flu season. People should begin getting vaccinated soon after flu vaccine becomes available to ensure that as many people as possible are protected before flu season begins.

To assist residents in getting the flu shot, the health department will be offering two off-site flu clinics:

October 14th: The Older American's Fair, Dearth Center, Coldwater, MI, 9 a.m. to noon.

October 17th: Hillsdale County Health Fair, Perennial Park, Hillsdale, MI, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In addition, the health department is offering flu clinics on the following days in each of its local county offices:

Mondays – Branch County Office, 570 N. Marshall Road, Coldwater, MI.

Call 517-279-9561 and follow the prompts to schedule an appointment.

Tuesdays – St. Joseph County Office, 1110 Hill Street, Three Rivers, MI.

Call 269-273-2161 and follow the prompts to schedule an appointment.

Wednesdays – Hillsdale County Office, 20 Care Drive, Hillsdale, MI.

Call 517-437-7395 and follow the prompts to schedule an appointment.

Walk-ins are also accepted.

The cost of the vaccination is as follows: \$45 for Trivalent high-dose and \$35 for Quadrivalent dose. The high dose is a trivalent vaccine which offers protection against two influenza A strains, including H1N1, and one influenza B strain. According to Kim Wilhelm, Prevention Services Director “High-dose vaccine is designed for those 65 years and older. It provides a higher dose of antigen which can help seniors develop a better immune response to the flu virus.” Kim adds “The quadrivalent vaccine is for all those over the age of six months and helps protect against the same strains targeted by the trivalent vaccine, plus one additional influenza B strain.”

To assist you with covering the cost of the flu shot, the health department accepts Medicaid, Medicare Part B, Blue Cross/Blue Shield and other major insurers. Also, if you have a child under the age of 19 years who is insured by Medicaid, is underinsured or is insured but lacks immunization coverage, he or she may be eligible to receive his/her flu shot free of charge through the Vaccine for Children Program.

Seasonal flu can be a serious medical condition. Exercise your right to good health by bearing your arm and getting your flu shot. You will be glad you did! To learn more about seasonal flu, flu vaccinations or other communicable diseases, check out our website at www.bhsj.org.

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