



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MARCH 23, 2010

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H1N1 FLU VIRUS STILL ACTIVE IN TENNESSEE *Local Flu Activity Prompts Reminder to Get Vaccinated*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Tennessee Department of Health continues its efforts to ensure the health of state residents as cases of H1N1 flu are still affecting some pockets of the state. Though flu activity has declined since late October, recent activity across Tennessee should encourage people who have not been vaccinated to get the H1N1 flu vaccine to protect themselves and their communities.

“The flu season is not over. Recent cases of severe illness and death serve as an important reminder that the flu virus can be serious,” said Health Commissioner Susan R. Cooper, MSN, RN. “Flu activity caused by either H1N1 or seasonal flu viruses may rise and fall, but we continue to encourage Tennesseans to take advantage of the ample availability and opportunities to get vaccinated.”

The flu virus is unpredictable. On average, flu complications result in more than 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths in the United States each year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention monitors H1N1 and other influenza activity levels and trends through a nationwide surveillance system. Recent reports estimate that the H1N1 flu has contributed to an average of 59 million cases of the virus, approximately 265,000 H1N1-related hospitalizations, and as many as 17,000 related deaths between April 2009 and mid-February 2010 in the United States.

“The H1N1 flu virus has caused substantial outbreaks of disease outside of the normal influenza seasons,” said State Epidemiologist Tim F. Jones, MD. “Our surveillance systems show that the virus is still active in Tennessee and could continue to cause local outbreaks for weeks or months. The best protection against this is vaccination.”

H1N1 flu vaccine is widely available throughout Tennessee to anyone who wishes to receive it, and it's not too late to get a flu vaccine this season. To get information about vaccine availability, contact your health care provider or your county health department. H1N1 flu vaccine is still being offered at no cost to patients at county health department clinics across the state. Additionally, retail locations are offering the vaccine for a fee. Visit the TDOH Flu Shot Locator online at <http://health.state.tn.us/fluclinic/default.aspx> to find a location near you.

The Tennessee Department of Health continues to distribute flu prevention posters free of charge to businesses, government agencies and the public encouraging residents to get vaccinated, practice respiratory etiquette and stay home when sick. “What do you do to prevent the flu?” posters are readily available for pick-up at local county health departments for distribution and display at public locations throughout the community.

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