

# Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department



Web: [health.hamiltontn.org](http://health.hamiltontn.org)

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

October 21, 2020

## **Health Department, Maclellan and Benwood Foundations Expand Free Flu Vaccine Clinics to Vulnerable Populations, Residents 18 and Over Eligible to Receive Shot**

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Hamilton County Health Department, in partnership with the Maclellan and Benwood Foundations, will offer free flu vaccine to the county’s most vulnerable at various drive-thru clinics this fall. Locations will rotate to local African American churches beginning at Orchard Knob Missionary Baptist Church this Saturday, October 24 from 10AM – 2PM. A complete schedule of the locations and dates will be updated regularly on the [Health Department’s online calendar](#), [social media accounts](#) and [electronic newsletter](#).

“Working with the Maclellan and Benwood Foundations gives us the opportunity to expand flu vaccine opportunities to vulnerable populations,” said Health Department Director of Community Health Services Bill Ulmer, “The data confirm that minority populations in Hamilton County suffer a greater burden of illness and death from all chronic diseases, thus making them more susceptible to viruses and making them at greater risk for severe illness and death because of their exposure.”

The flu shots will be free for Hamilton County adults 18 years of age and older. No appointment is necessary. Everyone in the car should be wearing a mask before receiving the vaccine. Bilingual interpreters will be on-hand at each site.

According to the Health Department’s [2019 Picture of Our Health report](#), the Hamilton County black population suffered from chronic illnesses at proportionally higher rates than the Hamilton County white population. Many of these chronic illnesses form the underlying conditions that make infectious diseases, such influenza and COVID-19, more severe or deadly than in persons without underlying conditions. Vaccinating against influenza can reduce the chances of getting the flu, or reduce the severity of it, which could mean the difference between life and death for some.

"The Maclellan Foundation is pleased to collaborate with the Health Department and the Benwood Foundation to provide flu vaccines to our vulnerable communities at this critical time," said Chris Maclellan, Vice Chairman of the Maclellan Foundation. "If we can help reduce suffering or death for even a single resident then we will have fulfilled our mission. We believe in the leadership role provided by the Pastors and churches in our city, and we are happy to support them in serving their neighborhoods."

The flu vaccine is recommended for all persons age 6 months or older who do not have contraindications. Those at highest risk for serious complications from the flu include children under 5 years, adults 65 years and over, pregnant women, and those with preexisting medical conditions or a compromised immune system. The Health Department is encouraging everyone to get a flu shot this year and to get it early. This flu season is going to be more challenging than ever due to the added risk of COVID-19 in our community.

Although this initiative is for adults 18 and over, free flu vaccine opportunities are available for children as well. Parents may make an appointment with the Health Department’s 3<sup>rd</sup> St. pediatric clinic at 423-209-8050 or the Sequoyah Health Center at 423-209-5490.

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For more information about COVID-19 or the flu vaccine, call the Health Department's hotline at 423-209-8383 or visit the calendar on their [website](#). The Health Department continues to offer free COVID-19 testing at the Alstom site 7 days a week, from 8:30AM – 1:00PM.

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