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H1N1 Illnesses and Deaths Continue in Hamilton County, Time For Vaccination Is Now

Chattanooga, TN- The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department has reported a decrease in the amount of influenza-like illness in the past month, although 2 deaths from H1N1 flu were reported last week, bringing the total deaths from H1N1 influenza in Hamilton County residents to 5 adults. The two deaths last week occurred in females aged 25 and 27 and one was pregnancy-related. Since the beginning of the outbreak, 50 Tennessee residents have died from H1N1.

Most persons who become ill with the flu will have milder symptoms and recover at home within 7 to 10 days. Individuals who develop severe symptoms or develop complications such as pneumonia may need to be hospitalized. At this time, flu is still causing very serious illness in our community. Although illness with this H1N1 strain has decreased, the virus will continue to circulate and cause potentially serious infection in the next few months.

"The impact of these untimely deaths on their families and our community remind us how devastating this flu can be," says Becky Barnes, Administrator at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department. She continues, "Don't take a chance with a potentially deadly disease when there is a safe, effective, and readily available vaccine offered at multiple locations and times free of charge."

Vaccine is now available to anyone who wants one and is being given in multiple locations, including physician offices and retail pharmacies. Residents are encouraged to check with their medical provider to determine if they have the H1N1 vaccine. H1N1 flu is a preventable disease, and the Health Department encourages residents to protect themselves and those around them from flu.

Because the 2009 H1N1 epidemic is expected to come in multiple waves, it's not too late to get vaccinated against the virus. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 85% of the population have not contracted the H1N1 virus, further validating public health calls to vaccinate all eligible individuals to lessen the burden of anticipated future waves.

This weekend the Health Department will be offering walk-in service for the free H1N1 vaccine at Hamilton Place Mall. The clinic is located on the lower level next to Dillard's and across from the children's play area.

HAMILTON PLACE CLINIC HOURS:
Friday, December 11th - 1:00pm to 8:30pm
Saturday, December 12th - 9:30am to 8:30pm
Sunday, December 13th - 12:30pm to 7:30pm

Appointments for the free H1N1 vaccine administered by the Health Department can be made by calling the Health Department hotline at 209-8393. Hotline operating hours are from 8:30am to 4:00pm Monday through Friday. For updates, follow the Health Department on Twitter- @HamiltonHealth.

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