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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Flu Season Approaches

- Protect Yourself From Pneumonia Caused by Seasonal or H1N1 Flu -

Fort Myers, FL – Flu season is coming up, and even now we’re seeing cases of H1N1—the Pandemic Flu. Any type of flu can be a serious illness, and some people who develop influenza become more seriously ill when the flu leads to pneumonia, a serious and sometimes deadly lung disease.

Many of the people who have been critically ill with the H1N1 (Swine Flu) this year have also developed pneumonia during their illness. However, there are vaccines available to prevent some forms of influenza and pneumonia.

“The pneumonia vaccine won’t keep you from getting the flu. But getting the pneumonia vaccine is a proactive measure people can take to further protect themselves from the serious and sometimes deadly complications that can result from acquiring the flu, either seasonal or H1N1 (swine flu), said Judith A. Hartner, M.D., M.P.H., M.P.A., Director of the Lee County Health Department.

Many of us think that only older people need to have the “pneumonia shot.” It is true that people 65 years of age and older should get a pneumonia vaccine, but others age 2 through 64 years of age are also at high risk for complications from pneumonia that is oftentimes brought on by a bout of the flu either seasonal or H1N1 (swine flu). People who should consider getting a pneumonia vaccine include:

- All adults 65 years of age and older;
- Any adult 19 – 64 years of age who smokes, has asthma or some other chronic respiratory complication;
- Anyone 2 – 64 years of age who has a disease or condition that lowers the body’s resistance to infection, such as Hodgkin’s disease; lymphoma or leukemia; kidney failure; multiple myeloma, nephritic syndrome; HIV or AIDS, damaged spleen; or organ transplant;
- Anyone 2 – 64 years of age who is taking a drug treatment that lowers the body’s resistance to infection, such as: long-term steroids, certain cancer drugs, or radiation therapy;



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- For children 2 – 18 years of age, parents should consult the child's healthcare provider to determine if the pneumonia vaccine is right for their child. Also, pneumonia vaccine in children requires a doctor's prescription.

The cost of the adult vaccine at the Lee County Health Department is \$40.00, cash or check only (no credit cards accepted). If you have Medicare Part B as your primary insurance, the health department will bill Medicare, however other forms of insurance will not be billed.

Start thinking now about protecting you and your family from all types of influenza and pneumonia. Stay well! Contact your healthcare provider or the Lee County Health Department for more information (239) 332-9601.

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