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PRESS RELEASE

HEALTH DEPARTMENT UNVEILS 2019-2020 FLU/PNEUMONIA CLINICS SCHEDULE! *OCHD OFFERING MORE THAN 60 CLINICS FOR RESIDENTS*

(Toms River) - Coming off of one of the worst flu seasons in decades, the Ocean County Health Department (OCHD) is encouraging residents of all ages to get vaccinated as we head into a brand new flu and pneumonia season. The Ocean County Health Department will offer more than 60 flu/pneumo clinics open to the general public beginning on September 28th and running throughout the fall and winter and into March. For a complete schedule of clinic locations, dates and times residents can visit the OCHD website at www.ochd.org and click on flu clinic schedule.

"The Ocean County Health Department has provided the residents of Ocean County flu clinics for a very long time. Our professional staff and experienced nurses are always knowledgeable about the latest vaccines and can answer any questions you may have about the right vaccine choice for you. We urge everyone - toddlers to seniors - to be protected this flu season by being vaccinated," says Ocean County Freeholder Gerry P. Little, liaison to the Ocean County Board of Health.

This season the OCHD is offering a **standard** dose flu vaccine that will protect children and adults. There is also a **high** dose available that's intended to provide a higher immunity level for people 65 years of age and older. The pneumococcal vaccine, or the pneumo shot, is also being offered at the clinics for people 65 years of age or older.

"Both the flu and pneumo vaccines are important for our senior residents. People who get the flu may be more susceptible to infection with the bacteria that can lead to this type of pneumonia, which is very common in people over the age of 65," advises Daniel E. Regenye, OCHD Public Health Coordinator.

It's important to remember that the flu virus is extremely contagious and can be spread by coughing and sneezing. Symptoms usually last only a few days and may include fever, cough, sore throat, headaches, chills, muscle aches and fatigue. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), there were record-breaking levels of illness and hospitalization rates last flu season. The flu killed and hospitalized more people in the United States last winter than any seasonal influenza in several decades. The flu took the lives of about 80,000 people in the 2017-2018 season.

"We certainly want to avoid a flu season like we had last year. We still had less than half the U.S. population getting vaccinated. There was also a drop in children under 5 receiving the vaccine. That can be dangerous because children are at highest risk for flu complications," added Regenye.

As for cost, Medicare Part B covers the flu and pneumo shot at all OCHD clinics. For those without Medicare Part B or have a Medicare Managed Care Plan, the cost will be \$20.00. A physician's note or prescription is required for a pneumonia shot for those under the age of 65.

Individuals who are homebound can call the Ocean County Health Department at 732-341-9700 ext. 7604 to schedule an appointment to receive a homebound flu shot.

Besides offering flu and pneumonia vaccines at the clinics, the Ocean County Health Department also will provide chronic disease screening services. Residents can have their blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol tested at no cost.

For more information on the flu/pneumonia clinic schedule please refer to the OCHD website at www.ochd.org, or follow the Health Department at Twitter@OCpublichealth or like us on Facebook. Also, please check out our new website at www.phu2.org, to access and learn more about our Public Health is You Too! campaign to help equip you to take simple steps to improve your health.

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