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For Immediate Release

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INFLUENZA SEASON UNDERWAY IN RACINE COUNTY

The 2017/2018 influenza season is underway in Racine County as well as Wisconsin and the US. According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, influenza is affecting all age groups at this time; however, influenza hospitalizations and severe disease is disproportionately affecting people who are over 65 years old. As an indicator of the severity of this flu season, the total number of influenza-associated hospitalizations in Racine County has already equaled the total number observed for the entire 2016/2017 influenza season, and we are only midway through our current influenza season.

Influenza vaccination is the single most important method to prevent influenza infections. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all people aged 6 months and older should receive a flu shot. Children under 6 months of age are best protected when their household members and caregivers are vaccinated against influenza. Flu shots are still available from various health care providers throughout the community. It is not too late to be vaccinated if you have not already done so.

Additional methods to protect yourself and others from contracting and spreading influenza include the following:

- Practicing good handwashing
- Covering nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Staying home if experiencing any symptoms of influenza, which include:
 - Fever ○ Sore Throat ○ Fatigue
 - Chills ○ Runny Nose
 - Cough ○ Body Aches
- Returning to work or school only until 24 hours after the fever is gone without fever-reducing medication
- Seeking medical treatment if experiencing flu symptoms, especially those belonging to the following high-risk groups:
 - Children younger than 5 ○ Pregnant Women
 - Adults 65 of age and older ○ Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

For more information, including where to get a flu shot, go to <https://vaccinefinder.org/>, contact your local health department, or visit: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/influenza/index.htm>

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