

District Health Department #4

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Pediatric Influenza Death Confirmed in Alpena County

A child from Alpena County is Michigan’s second reported death in children due to flu. Local and state health officials are urging everyone 6 months of age and older to get vaccinated.

On behalf of District Health Department No. 4, Dr. Joshua Meyerson, DHD4 Medical Director, would like to offer its deepest condolences to the family.

Flu is a contagious respiratory disease caused by different strains of the influenza virus and, although usually self-limiting, can result in severe illness. Meyerson strongly recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get a seasonal flu vaccine. He states “Flu vaccine is the best way to prevent against getting the flu and can also reduce the severity of flu illness.”

Vaccine is especially important for persons at increased risk for complications from flu, including children, adults ages 65 years and older, persons of any age with underlying medical conditions and pregnant women. Children less than 6 months of age are too young to be vaccinated and need to be protected by vaccination of their close contacts, including parents, siblings, grandparents, childcare providers and health care personnel.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, last year’s flu season was estimated to be the deadliest since the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. More than 79,000 deaths were attributed to the flu, 185 of which were children. Last year only 39.5% of Michigan residents were vaccinated against flu, below the national rate of 41.7 person

There is still plenty of flu vaccine available and it is not too late to receive a vaccination. Call District Health Department No. 4, 1-800-221-0294, or health care provider or your local pharmacies.

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