September 27, 2011

News Release

*For Immediate Release*

**Make Plans for Early Flu Vaccination**

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department is reminding everyone that the best way to stay healthy and avoid getting the flu is to get vaccinated. This year the 2011-2012 seasonal flu vaccine will offer protection from the three most common flu viruses that will circulate this flu season, one of which will be the 2009 H1N1 flu virus. It is never too early to be vaccinated. It is important to make time to get a seasonal flu shot this year, even if you had the flu or were vaccinated last year. Flu viruses change every year and immunity to flu viruses can fade throughout the year. Flu vaccines prevent illness and boost immunity against the flu.

Vaccination is the best way to protect you and your family from the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) now recommends that everyone over the age of 6 months receive a flu shot. Flu vaccine will be available throughout the community, in both healthcare and in retail settings for adults. Most healthcare providers offer flu shots to patients and retail locations provide flu shots for adults making it easy and convenient to get vaccinated. Many retail locations offer billing services for Medicare and Medicaid on behalf of the patient. Contact individual retailers for more information on flu shot availability and billing services. The community Springfield Flu Immunization Coalition will also offer clinics for Greene County adults without health insurance to cover flu vaccinations during the month of November. More information about these clinics will be available soon.

In order to reduce the sickness and spread of flu among the children in Greene County, the Springfield-Greene County Health Department will be offering walk-in flu clinics for children at Westside Public Health Center, located at 660 S. Scenic. Children ages 6 months through 18 years of age and pregnant women are encouraged to attend. Preventing flu illness and spread in the children in our community is also effective in preventing the spread of flu in the rest of the population. Walk-in flu clinics will be available:

- October 18, 2011 3-7 pm
- October 25, 2011 3-7 pm
- November 3, 2011 3-7 pm

The flu can cause serious illness and even death. It is important to take steps to protect yourself, your loved ones and in turn, our community, from unnecessary sickness. For more information, please call the flu information line at 417-874-1228.

For more information contact: Katie Towns Jeter MPH Public Information Administrator 417-874-1205