Flu season is quickly approaching and now is the time to make plans to protect yourself and your loved ones from getting sick this year! 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 2010-2011 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 important to make time to get a seasonal flu shot this year even if you were vaccinated last year. Flu viruses change every year and can make people very sick even if they have had the flu previously.

Flu vaccine will be available throughout the community. Most health care providers will offer flu shots for their patients, retail locations have already begun offering vaccinations, and the community Flu Coalition will be offering clinics for people at high-risk for complications from the flu. More information about these clinics will be available soon. The Springfield-Greene County Health Department has compiled a list of retail locations providing flu shots which is available on our website at http://www.springfieldmo.gov/health/flu.html. This list offers contact information for retail locations throughout the community that will make it easy to find a convenient place to get vaccinated. Many of these retail locations offer billing services for Medicare or Medicaid on behalf of the patient. Contact them for more information on flu shot availability and billing services.

Local public health agencies have collaborated once again to provide an informative website filled with resources related to seasonal flu. Fight the Flu (www.FightTheFluMO.com) has been updated with current information about the 2010-2011 seasonal flu and how to avoid getting sick from the flu. Information is provided for many different segments of the community, including health care workers, faith-based communities, businesses, parents, daycares and schools and many others. You may access information by visiting www.FightTheFluMO.com.

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, contact: Katie Towns-Jeter MPH, Public Information Administrator, 417-874-1205