

ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

County Flu Cases Continue To Rise

“Children 1-9 Years Most Affected”

The number of laboratory confirmed cases of influenza in Oneida County has more than quadrupled since first reported less than two weeks ago, Oneida County Health Department officials said today.

“At the moment, the number of confirmed cases of flu in Oneida County stands at 562” Patrice Bogan, Interim Director of Health said. She continued, *“To put this in perspective, the entire 2011-2012 flu season saw a total of 329 confirmed cases reported to the health department.”*

Bogan said the greatest percentage of confirmed cases at this time is among the 1-9 years of age group while adults over 60 years represent the second largest group affected. As with many other diseases, influenza and its complications pose the greatest threat to the very young and older persons who might have underlying chronic conditions like asthma or bronchitis. Flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months and older. It takes two weeks after receiving the vaccine for a person to build sufficient antibodies and develop immunity.

In response to the sudden rise in flu case numbers County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. has directed the health department to offer additional flu immunization clinics.

“The health department will hold flu clinics every Friday from 1-3 pm throughout the month of December at their facility at 406 Elizabeth Street in Utica. These clinics are in addition to the ones held on Monday’s and Thursdays from 1-3:30 pm. I urge all County residents who haven’t yet received the vaccine to do so as soon as possible,” Picente said.

In addition, Picente reminded residents to help stop the spread of flu in Oneida County by following some simple practices like frequent hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, staying home from work or school when sick and avoiding persons exhibiting flu-like symptoms.

For more information on influenza contact the Oneida County Health Department at 798-6400 or visit the web site at ocgov.net/oneida/health.

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