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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Increase in Flu in Northern Michigan

Flu vaccines are available to help prevent illness this winter.

Benzie and Leelanau County residents are seeing rising transmission of influenza (Flu). According to the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), emergency department visits for respiratory symptoms, particularly flu-like illnesses, have increased in recent weeks and are among the highest levels seen so far this season in the state and locally. Flu often starts rising in December and peaks in March and we are currently seeing this trend in Northern Michigan, as well as elsewhere in the state.

Respiratory viruses spread easily, especially in fall and winter, and can cause symptoms ranging from mild coughs and runny noses to severe illness requiring medical care. Flu seasons in recent years have led to thousands of hospitalizations statewide, and a large proportion of emergency department visits have been linked to respiratory illnesses including flu.

"Our community is seeing more people come in sick with coughs, fever and breathing trouble," said Dr. Meyerson, Medical Director of the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department. "The good news is that vaccines can help prevent severe illness and it isn't too late to get a flu vaccine. Flu vaccines, along with other respiratory vaccines, protect you, your family, and our entire community."

MDHHS continues to recommend influenza vaccines every year. Staying current with vaccines is one of the most effective ways to reduce spread and protect people at highest risk.

To help protect yourself and others this winter:

- Get vaccinated for flu vaccines are widely available and recommended for most people.
- Stay home when sick and avoid contact with others if you are experiencing respiratory symptoms.
- Practice good hygiene by covering coughs, washing hands often with soap and water, and using hand sanitizer when appropriate.
- Clean common surfaces regularly disinfect high-touch areas in your home and workplace.

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department has flu and other respiratory vaccines available for residents. Vaccination appointments can be scheduled by calling 231-882-4409 ext 3.

Resources:

- [Influenza surveillance in Michigan](#)
- [MDHHS Respiratory Illness Dashboard](#)

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