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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For additional information contact:**

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**Reservations begin today for upcoming H1N1 vaccine clinics**

(Grand Rapids, MI) – Starting today, Kent County residents who are at high risk for complications from novel H1N1 influenza may reserve their spot at upcoming vaccination clinics at the Kent County Health Department (KCHD).

Clinics will be offered from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on three Saturdays – November 7, 14, and 21. **Vaccines will be administered by reservation only** at the following KCHD clinic locations:

**Main Clinic - 700 Fuller Ave. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503**  
**Sheldon Clinic - 121 Franklin St. SE Ste. 130, Grand Rapids, MI 49507**

The vaccine is expected to become more widely available in the coming weeks, as manufacturers distribute more vaccine. In Kent County, residents are advised to check with their doctor to see if they plan to offer the vaccine when it arrives. If so, residents should receive the vaccine at the doctor's office. Requirements for getting vaccinated at one of KCHD's H1N1 vaccine clinics are as follows:

**Kent County resident**

**Belong to one of the following high-risk groups:**

- Pregnant women
- Caretakers of children under 6 months
- Those age 6 months to 24 years
- Between the ages of 25 and 64 and have a health condition associated with a high risk of medical complications from influenza

KCHD is enlisting the aid of our area 2-1-1 center to handle all reservations for the upcoming H1N1 flu vaccination clinics. **To lessen the possibility of long lines of people with no guarantee of vaccine, the vaccine clinics will not be taking walk-in traffic. Instead, those who meet the vaccination criteria must call 2-1-1 or (616) 459-2255 to schedule a vaccine time.**

United Way's 2-1-1 is a free hotline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to all Kent County residents. It is the primary information and referral number to call in Kent County for community services. Callers are asked to be patient as they call to reserve their appointments. KCHD anticipates a high volume of phone calls,

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to the whole of Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and the Westside of Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD and our services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health). Follow us at [twitter.com/kchd](https://twitter.com/kchd) and search for us on facebook.

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and callers may have to hold for several minutes. Calls will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis. Currently, the demand for H1N1 vaccine surpasses the supply, so not every caller will be able to reserve a spot. “We do anticipate that anyone who wants a vaccine will eventually be able to get one,” said Cathy Raevsky, Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. “We ask for patience and civility as we work to make reservations for those who need vaccine the most. We chose to sign people up in advance to avoid the frustration and disappointment people might feel after waiting in line for hours only to be told there is no vaccine remaining. We hope that by using 2-1-1 we are streamlining the clinic processes and signing up only as many people as doses of the vaccine to avoid chaos and disappointment.”

KCHD has received numerous calls from concerned residents over the last few weeks. Many of these calls are from people who would like to be vaccinated against novel H1N1 influenza. While the vaccine is being pushed out into the community as fast as it is arriving, it has been arriving slower than originally anticipated. Vaccination is the number one way to avoid the flu each year, but there are other measures that people can take to stay healthy including avoiding people who are ill, washing hands thoroughly, and avoiding touching the facial area.

“Most of us who come down with H1N1 flu will experience mild illness and a quick recovery,” added Raevsky. “But some people are at higher risk for severe illness than others, so it’s important that we vaccinate those individuals as soon as possible.”

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