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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

H1N1 Vaccine Safety

Influenza Hotline: 1-800-447-1985

H1N1 influenza vaccine continues to arrive in Bremer County, Visiting Nursing Association – Bremer County Public Health reminds residents the 2009 H1N1 vaccine is as safe as the seasonal influenza vaccine. “There is a lot of misinformation out there,” said Debbie Crawford RN (director). The H1N1 vaccine is made by the same process, by the same companies, and tested in the same manner as the seasonal vaccine. There is no reason to believe there are any more risks associated with the H1N1 vaccine than the seasonal influenza vaccine.” The vaccine is allotted based on population. Visiting Nursing Association is working with local physician vaccine providers to administer the vaccine.

Ms. Crawford RN says in a normal influenza season, the H1N1 vaccine would have been incorporated into the seasonal vaccine; however, because the seasonal vaccine was already in production when the H1N1 influenza was recognized, it was necessary for two vaccines to be created. Next year, the H1N1 strain will likely be included in the seasonal vaccination.

“The risks associated with not getting the H1N1 vaccine are far greater than the sore arm that may result from getting the shot,” said Debbie Crawford RN. “This virus has the potential to cause serious illness and death. Receiving the vaccination is an effective way to help fight the spread of the virus.”

The seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine can be given at the same time, or at any time in regards to each, and in any sequence ***with one exception***: if using the live nasal spray vaccine for BOTH the seasonal flu and H1N1, they should be given 4 weeks apart to ensure the best protection from both vaccines.

Since the vaccine is being allocated to states on a staggered basis over the coming weeks, it is important for residents to contact Visiting Nursing Association – Bremer County Public Health for information at 319-235-6201. Information about vaccine availability and vaccine clinic sites may also be found at www.vnawaterloo.org/bcph.html . For a map of vaccine clinic sites in Iowa, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/webmap/default.asp?map=h1n1_vaccine_sites.

A statewide toll-free hotline has been established for public questions about seasonal and H1N1 influenza at 1-800-447-1985. More information can also be found at www.idph.state.ia.us.