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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Bremer County Public Health Ready for Flu Season

Bremer County public health officials say they are ready for the flu season. “We are working closely with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH),” said Debbie Crawford RN Executive Director. “On the local level, we are coordinating with schools and businesses to keep residents healthy and minimize the potential impact of the flu.”

Personal measures to take to prevent the spread of the virus include:

- Cover your cough,
- Clean your hands, and
- Contain germs by staying home when ill.

It is always important to help control the spread of viruses; but for many, taking time off from school or work is difficult. The symptoms of influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people with influenza may vomit or have diarrhea. Children and adults with these symptoms should stay home, and should not return to work, school or daycare until they have been fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours.

“Having an ill child at home can be challenging,” said Debbie Crawford RN Executive Director. “By planning ahead, parents can arrange to make child care easier for everyone.” Parents can contact others in the neighborhood or parents from their children’s classroom to make prior arrangements for ill children. “This is really a time for planning and cooperation,” said Debbie Crawford RN Executive Director. “Employees need to be aware of their company’s sick leave policy and employers should consider ways to be flexible so business can continue and workers and their family can stay well.”

By working together and understanding each other’s needs, employers and employees can weather the flu season with minimal impact to the well-being of individuals or the business.

- Understand your employer’s policies for sick time and their plan for dealing with influenza.
- If you are unable to take sick leave to care for your ill children, consider other options, including family or friends who may be able to assist and care for your children.
- If your employer does not offer sick leave, they may be able to offer other options that will encourage a healthy work environment, including the opportunity to work from home or flexible work hours.

Do not assume that because you do not have designated sick leave that your employer won’t work with you.

For more information on caring for an ill person in your home, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm.

Questions call Visiting Nursing Association – Bremer County Public Health at 319-235-6201. 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.