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INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATIONS for CHATHAM RESIDENTS

Seasonal influenza immunizations will be available to Chatham residents in October. Those 50 years of age and older have two opportunities to receive flu vaccine: Saturday, October 8, 2016 from 9:00 to 11:00 am at St. Patrick's Parish Center, 45 Oliver St. or Wednesday, October 26, 2016 from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. at Chatham Township Senior Center, 58 Meyersville Road, Chatham Township. No appointments are necessary. Seniors with a Medicare Part B card are asked to bring it to the clinic. All are reminded to wear short sleeves if possible when they come for their flu shot. The immunizations are provided by the Boards of Health of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township and the Madison Health Department.

Seasonal flu vaccine is recommended by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for everyone over the age of 6 months. The CDC states: "Vaccination is especially important for people at higher risk of severe influenza and their close contacts, including healthcare personnel and close contacts of children younger than 6 months." Everyone should get the annual, seasonal influenza vaccine. Additionally, all pregnant women, women who are planning to become pregnant, women postpartum and women who are breast-feeding during the influenza season should be vaccinated.

Most people are ill with flu for only a few days, but some get much sicker and may need to be hospitalized especially the very young, the elderly and those with coexisting conditions that may result in complications if influenza illness develops.

The 2016-2017 flu vaccine offers protection against four virus strains most likely to cause illness this coming season: A/California (H1N1), A/Hong Kong, B/Phuket and B/Brisbane. It takes up to two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop and protection may last for up to one year.

While flu spreads every year, the timing, severity, and length of the season varies from one year to another. Seasonal flu activity can begin as early as October and continue to occur as late as May. Getting vaccine during the fall months should provide protection for the whole season, although vaccinations may be given any time during the flu season. Protect yourself, your family and those in your community by getting your flu vaccine at this year's clinic.

Any questions may be directed to the Madison Health Department at 973-593-3079 ext.9.

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