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## State Director on Aging urges Seniors to get Flu Shots in Observance of Healthy Aging Month

### *Seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccine are combined to protect this season*

**SPRINGFIELD** – In observance of September as Healthy Aging Month, Illinois Department on Aging Director Charles D. Johnson reminds seniors to prepare for the upcoming flu season by getting their flu shot. Seniors are at increased risk for the flu especially those who have certain chronic health conditions.

“It’s important older adults get a flu shot to protect themselves,” said Director Johnson. “Getting a flu shot this month can provide protection for the entire flu season, which usually starts in the fall and runs through spring.”

Good news this year is that only one flu vaccine is needed. The H1N1 strain has been rolled into the seasonal flu vaccine, so seniors as well as everyone else only need to get the one flu vaccine. Seniors are at higher risk for flu like complications so they should make getting a flu vaccine a priority. Seniors should also talk with their health care provider about getting a pneumococcal vaccine.

Public Health officials say it’s not too early to get a vaccine. The flu vaccine has started to arrive in Illinois, and will be available at local health departments across the state, as well as some doctor’s offices, health clinics, hospitals and pharmacies. The cost of vaccine may vary, but is covered by Medicare, Medicaid and by some insurance companies.

The flu, formally called influenza, is spread through coughing or sneezing. In addition to getting a flu shot, people are also encouraged to use good sanitary measures, such as covering the mouth and nose when coughing/sneezing, washing hands and staying away from others when sick.

For more information about program services to assist older adults in Illinois and their caregivers, visit [www.state.il.us/aging](http://www.state.il.us/aging) or call the Department on Aging Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327.

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