



## NEWS RELEASE

### Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein

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### BURSTEIN URGES VACCINATION AS FLU SEASON APPROACHES

*Multiple Types of Vaccinations, Easy Availability Make Prevention More Convenient*

**ERIE COUNTY, NY**— Today, Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein was joined by family members and friends at the offices of Tonawanda Pediatrics in East Amherst as she received an influenza vaccination and encouraged all County residents to do the same. The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses, which can cause mild to severe illness; certain populations are at high risk for serious flu complications. The best way to prevent this illness is by getting a flu vaccination. It is especially important for some people to get vaccinated. Those people include:

- People who are at high risk of developing serious complications like pneumonia if they get sick with the flu, including: people who have certain medical conditions including asthma, diabetes, morbid obesity, and chronic lung disease; pregnant or post partum women or women who are breast feeding; and people 65 years and older.
- People who are immunosuppressed
- People who live with or care for others who are at high risk of developing serious complications
- Health care providers
- Young children, especially those under 2 years of age

“I can’t stress enough how important it is that everyone who is at least 6 months of age get a flu vaccination this year, and get it as soon as possible in order to prevent the spread of flu,” **said Burstein.** “Vaccinations are quick and easy, are available at numerous locations, and are an effective way to prevent illness. With the arrival of fall weather, I urge all parents and caregivers to not only ensure that family members are vaccinated but make sure that they get vaccinated as well.”

Signs and symptoms of flu include: fever or feeling feverish/chills (although not everyone with flu will have a fever); cough; sore throat; runny or stuffy nose; muscle or body aches; headaches; fatigue; some people may experience vomiting or diarrhea, although this is more common in children than adults. Flu is spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

**Burstein continued,** “Thankfully, there are now several vaccine presentations available, including nasal spray, intradermal, and injectable, so there are options for delivering the vaccine to recipients. Also, vaccines are available at pharmacies, doctor’s offices, various community sites and agencies, and through

traveling clinics, so it's easier than ever to get yourself and your loved ones protected. Based on the Southern Hemisphere's recent flu season, two of the three strains included in this year's influenza vaccine are new from last year, so it is very important that we all get protected against these new strains of flu."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") recommend that yearly flu vaccination should begin in September and last throughout the flu season, which can last as late as May due to variations in the timing and duration of the season. Although in Western New York the peak flu season is in February/March, influenza seasons are unpredictable; vaccines received throughout the fall and winter will remain viable through the end of June, 2013.

**For more influenza information:**

From the Erie County Department of Health, visit

<http://www2.erie.gov/health/index.php?q=novel-influenza-h1n1-virus-information>

From the New York State Department of Health, visit

<http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/seasonal/>

[http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/fact\\_sheet.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/fact_sheet.htm)

From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm>

[http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/pdf/seasonal-flu/flu\\_and\\_you\\_english\\_508.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/pdf/seasonal-flu/flu_and_you_english_508.pdf)

From the Immunization Action Coalition, visit

<http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4208.pdf>

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