

Somerset County Senior Flu Clinic
October 29, 2010

Introduction

Good Morning. It's great seeing so many of you here today getting vaccinated and learning about these services offered through the county.

I want to thank Somerset County Office on Aging Executive Director Joanne Fetzko for inviting me here today to meet everyone.

Flu Message

October marks the beginning of flu season, so I have been out talking to residents about how important it is to protect yourself from the flu.

Healthy people of all ages can get the flu. Although most individuals are ill for only a few days to a week, some individuals contract a much more serious illness, such as pneumonia, and may need to be hospitalized.

Additionally, it has been recognized for many years that people 65 years and older are at greater risk of serious complications from the flu compared with young, healthy adults.

- Estimates tell us that 90% of seasonal flu-related deaths
- and more than 60 % of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations in the US each year occur in people 65 years and older.

So influenza can be a very serious disease for people 65 and older, therefore it is critical to take precautionary measures to avoid getting sick.

Flu vaccinations continue to be the best single method of preventing the flu. The flu shot is safe and it is effective. This year's seasonal flu vaccine will protect against 3 flu viruses, including H1N1. So you will only need to get one shot this year.

For the first time, CDC has recommended that beginning this year everyone 6 months and older should get an annual flu shot. That means there will be no targeted groups like last year during H1N1 vaccinations – so everyone over 6 mos. is eligible to get a flu shot and there is plenty of vaccine available.

While you are taking steps to protect your health, we also need you to carry this message to your children and grandchildren...we need them to get vaccinated as well.

The more people that get flu shots the better protected our communities will be.

In addition to vaccination, there are precautions everyone should take to reduce the spread of all infectious diseases:

- Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently.
- Cover coughs and sneezes

- Stay home if you are sick.

Closing

All of you here today are on the right track to staying healthy by getting vaccinated. This is a critical first step to protecting your health. I congratulate you all on taking control of your health and please share this message with your family, so you all can stay well throughout the flu season.