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## MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Pierce County Health Department Offers Advice this Flu Season**

The Pierce County Health Department is reminding residents of ways to prevent the flu, with flu season only a month away. The Department is hosting a number of community-based flu shot clinics open to the public to ensure everyone who wants a flu shot can get one.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the 2017-2018 influenza season was severe with high levels of clinic and emergency department visits, high hospitalization rates, and widespread influenza activity for an extended time period. Wisconsin had over 7500 influenza associated hospitalizations during the 2017-2018 season.

The timing and strains of the flu are unpredictable and can vary in from season to season. The 2018-2019 flu vaccines have been updated to better match current circulating viruses. Seasonal flu activity often begins as early as October and November and can continue through May. The Health Department reminds people not to wait until others around them are sick to get the shot. "Getting vaccinated before flu activity begins helps protect you once flu season starts in your community. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for the body's immune response to fully respond and for you to be protected," said Rebecca Tomasek, Public Health Nurse. The CDC recommends that people get a flu vaccine by the end of October. However, getting vaccinated later can still be beneficial. CDC recommends ongoing flu vaccination as long as influenza viruses are circulating.

"The single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year, but good habits like covering your cough and washing your hands often can help stop the spread of germs and prevent illnesses like the flu. If you are sick with flu, stay home from work or school to prevent spreading flu to others," says Tomasek.

Our mission is to assure the health of the public, prevent disease and injury, promote health behaviors, and protect against environmental hazards.

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**Pierce County Health Department  
2018 Public Flu Shot Clinic Schedule**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
First Congregational Church in River Falls	Thursday, September 27	2:00-7:00pm
Pierce Pepin Co-op	Tuesday, October 2	4:00-7:00pm
Spring Valley Ambulance Hall	Wednesday, October 17	3:30-5:30pm
Ellsworth Public Health Office	Monday, October 22	2:00-4:00pm
Plum City Elementary	Tuesday, October 23	1:00-2:00pm
Elmwood School	Wednesday, October 24	3:00-4:00pm
Prescott High School Health Fair	Thursday, October 25	4:00-6:00pm

The cost is \$35.00 for regular flu shots & \$75.00 for high dose flu shots. (High dose vaccine is available for people 65 and over.)

There is no cost to you for the vaccine if you are covered by BadgerCare, Medicare Part B or Medicare affiliated HMOs, but you must have your insurance card with you.

No appointment is necessary during the scheduled clinics.

If you are unable to attend one of these clinics, call the Ellsworth Public Health Office, 715-273-6755, to schedule an appointment.

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