



**Stephanie Rawlings-Blake**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***Residents Urged to Get Vaccinated Against H1N1, Take Advantage of  
Flu Awareness Sunday Free Clinics***

**BALTIMORE, MD. (April 9, 2010)** – Anticipating the possible arrival of a third wave of H1N1 influenza cases in Maryland, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and the Baltimore City Health Department are appealing to city residents to get protected by getting vaccinated against the virus.

“Knowing that there are more flu cases and hospitalizations right now in the southeastern states means that we cannot become complacent,” Mayor Rawlings-Blake said. “Unfortunately, we continue to see hospitalizations and even deaths. This new virus is still with us, and it’s more important than ever to get vaccinated.”

The Centers for Disease Control has reported an elevation in local and regional flu activity in the southeastern U.S. for the past several weeks. The Health Department has consequently been urging residents to get vaccinated, especially those most at risk for complications from flu. These groups include the elderly, children under five, pregnant women, and those with chronic health conditions, such as asthma.

“It was a year ago this month that H1N1 swine flu first came to Maryland and I want to thank the public health professionals here in Baltimore City and across the state for their extraordinary efforts to educate and vaccinate the Marylanders we all serve,” said Frances Phillips, DHMH Deputy Secretary for Public Health Service. “The weather is beautiful, summer is around the corner and yet this flu is persistent. It continues to infect children and adults. The best protection for yourself and your family - even now - is vaccination.”

The CDC has reported only sporadic activity in Maryland, but there has been a slight increase in recent weeks in Baltimore City. Just this past week, a Baltimore city resident became the 45<sup>th</sup> person to die from the virus. Nine Baltimore City residents have died since the virus emerged in May, including two children under age 18, according to the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

“The virus disproportionately strikes those under 25 years of age, pregnant women and the chronically ill, especially asthmatics. Older adults are also at risk and should be vaccinated,” said Dr. Anne Bailowitz, acting Chief Medical Officer of the Baltimore City Health Department. “Getting vaccinated for H1N1 flu is fast, simple and protects you and your community. We want people to take advantage of the plentiful, safe and effective vaccine available at our free walk-in clinics.”

To promote H1N1 vaccinations, the Health Department is hosting “Flu Awareness Sunday” as part of national Public Health Week. Five free H1N1 flu clinics will be held on Sunday, April 11, the locations of which can be found at [baltimorehealth.org](http://baltimorehealth.org). The Health Department launched a multi-media advertising campaign Monday to promote the effort, using radio, bus stops, billboards and varied print formats to raise public awareness about the clinics.

For more information about H1N1 and future flu clinics, visit <http://www.baltimorehealth.org>.

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