



LaSalle County Health Department News Releases 2007



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**LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350**

433-3366

December 19, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“Information on Smoke-Free Illinois”

OTTAWA, IL - The LaSalle County Health Department is reminding everyone that the Smoke-Free Illinois Act goes into effect on January 1, 2008. The law prohibits smoking in all public places and places of employment. The law is designed to protect employees and the public from secondhand smoke.

The law prohibits smoking within 15 feet of any entrances, exits, windows that open, and ventilation intakes that serve an enclosed area where smoking is prohibited. The law requires ashtrays be removed from any area where smoking is prohibited. The law also requires “No Smoking” signs or the international “No Smoking” symbol be posted at every entrance in each public place and place of employment where smoking is prohibited. The signs must be posted at every entrance and exit, and should contain information on registering a complaint. Sample signs have been developed by the Illinois Department of Public Health and are available by visiting the LaSalle County Health Department website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

Complaints can be registered beginning January 1, 2008 by calling a toll-free complaint line at 1-866-973-4646 or by going on-line to the Smoke-Free Illinois website at www.smoke-free.illinois.gov. These complaints will be handled by the Illinois Department of Public Health, local health departments, and local law enforcement. According to the law, these agencies have been identified as enforcement agencies.

For more information on Smoke-Free Illinois, sign requirements, registering a complaint, or tips on smoking cessation, please contact LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
433-3366

November 26, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“LaSalle County Health Department Hold Flu Clinic in Honor of National Influenza Vaccination Week”

OTTAWA, IL - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced the week after Thanksgiving, November 27 to December 2, as National Influenza Vaccination Week. This event is designed to highlight the importance of continuing influenza (flu) vaccination, as well as foster greater use of flu vaccine through the months of November, December and beyond. This year, Tuesday November 27, 2007, is set aside as Children’s Flu Vaccination Day, with a focus on vaccinating high-risk children. Each year, over 20,000 children under age 5 are hospitalized as a result of influenza. This day will help raise awareness about the value of vaccinating children—especially high-risk children—and their close contacts.

In honor of National Influenza Vaccination Week, the LaSalle County Health Department will be holding a flu clinic on Tuesday, November 27th. The clinic will be located in Ottawa at the Health Department, 717 Etna Road, from 9:00am-4:00pm. No appointment is necessary.

The fee for a flu vaccination this year will be \$20. Billing will be provided for Medicare part B and Public Aid eligible clients who receive the vaccination. Typically, late October through December are the best months to be vaccinated because influenza activity in the United States generally peaks between late December and early March. LaSalle County Health Department supports the Centers for Disease Control recommendation to vaccinate all people, healthy or at risk, age 6 months and up. People who are at high risk for complications from influenza include:

- All children 6-59 months of age.
- Household contacts and out-of-home caretakers of infants from 0-23 months of age.
- People 65 of age and older.
- Residents and employees of long-term care facilities.
- People who have long-term health problems.
- People with certain conditions such as asthma and neuromuscular disorders that can cause breathing problems.

- People with a weakened immune system.
- People 6 months to 18 years of age on long-term aspirin treatment.
- Women who will be pregnant during influenza season.
- People who can spread influenza to those at high risk.
- Physicians, nurses, family members, or anyone else in close contact with people at risk of serious influenza.

A Doctor's order is **NO** longer required for children under 18, but all children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

This is also a good time for certain individuals to get a pneumonia vaccination. Pneumococcal disease caused by bacteria (*Streptococcus pneumonia*) which can cause serious infections. These infections include pneumonia and meningitis and can be prevented by getting a "Pneumonia shot". People who should get a pneumonia shot include:

- All persons aged 65 and older
- Adults and children with chronic illnesses of heart, lung, kidney, or liver
- Diabetics
- All persons with a weak immune system caused by HIV, cancer, organ transplant, immunosuppressive medicine such as corticosteroids, or splenectomy

A pneumonia shot is usually necessary only once for those over the age of 65. For those under 65 with a chronic illness it is recommended that it be repeated once after five years. People should get the shot even if they have had a pneumonia illness in the past.

The pneumonia vaccine will be available at all of the flu clinic sites. There will be a \$30 fee for the shot. Medicare part B and Medicaid will be billed for eligible clients. A receipt can be given upon request for those who would like to submit it to their insurance company.

For more information, please contact LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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LASALLE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
717 ETNA ROAD
OTTAWA, IL 61350
433-3366

November 9, 2007

“Prematurity Awareness Month”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL—The LaSalle County Health Department would like to inform the public that November is Prematurity Awareness Month. Premature birth is the number one cause of death for newborns and a major contributor to childhood illness and disability. Premature labor is a serious problem occurring before 37 weeks of pregnancy. This is too early, and your baby may be born too soon. Premature babies aren't just small babies they're babies who aren't finished developing. All babies deserve nine months so you should learn the signs of preterm labor.

Call your Health care provider right away if you experience any of these warning signs:

- Contractions every ten minutes or more often
- Change in vaginal discharge
- Pelvic pressure- feeling as though baby is pushing down
- Low, dull backache
- Cramps that feel like your period
- Abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea

Reducing the number of babies who are born prematurely greatly improves an infant and child's health.

For more information on prematurity you can contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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**LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
815-433-3366**

October 26, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“MRSA Prevention Tips”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 815-433-3366

OTTAWA, IL – Due to recent news coverage regarding Staphylococcus Aureus (Staph) and Community-Associated Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (CA-MRSA) the LaSalle County Health Department would like to educate the public on how to protect themselves from this common bacteria. It is important to remember that “staph” bacteria, including MRSA, have been and remain a common cause of skin infection.

Staph is bacteria commonly found on the skin or in the nose of healthy people. Approximately 25 to 30 percent of the population carry the bacteria without becoming ill. Sometimes staph causes minor skin infections that can be treated conservatively, without antibiotics. However, on occasion, staph bacteria can cause more serious skin infections, as well as bloodstream infections, pneumonia, etc. In recent years, the treatment of staph infections has become more problematic because the bacteria have become resistant to a variety of antibiotics, therefore resulting in MRSA.

CA-MRSA is usually transmitted by direct skin-to-skin contact or contact with shared items or surfaces that have come into contact with someone else’s infection. An easy way to remember the factors that may contribute to MRSA transmission is to focus on the Centers for Disease Control’s 5C’s.

***Crowding,**

***Contact (frequent skin-to-skin)**

***Compromised skin (ex. cuts or abrasions)**

***Contaminated items and surfaces**

***Cleanliness – a lack of**

According to Cathy Larsen, Director of Personal Health, “the control and prevention measures of MRSA are no different than any other common infectious disease. You want to break the cycle of an infectious

person spreading a disease to another person or their environment. Measures that need to be taken to keep the exposure contained, such as with MRSA, involve keeping the wound dry and covered and sanitizing surfaces that may have been contaminated by the wound. By doing both of these preventive measures it will help ensure the infection does not spread.”

The Health Department recommends the following Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines to protect yourself from MRSA:

- practicing good hygiene (e.g., keeping your hands clean by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and showering immediately after participating in exercise);
- covering skin trauma such as abrasions or cuts with a clean dry bandage until healed;
- avoiding sharing personal items (e.g., towels, razors) that come into contact with your bare skin; and using a barrier (e.g., clothing or a towel) between your skin and shared equipment such as weight-training benches;
- maintaining a clean environment by establishing cleaning procedures for frequently touched surfaces and surfaces that come into direct contact with people's skin.

For more information, please contact the Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
815-433-3366

September 26, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“LaSalle County Health Department Confirms First Case of West Nile Virus in LaSalle County”

OTTAWA, IL – A confirmed case of West Nile virus has been identified in LaSalle County. The confirmed case is a male in his 30's with West Nile fever. He became ill in late August.

Illness from West Nile virus is usually mild and includes fever, headache and body aches, but serious illness, such as encephalitis and meningitis, and death are possible. Neuroinvasive disease is the most severe form of the West Nile virus and affects a person's nervous system. Specific types of neuroinvasive disease include: West Nile encephalitis, West Nile meningitis or West Nile meningoencephalitis. Encephalitis refers to an inflammation of the brain, meningitis is an inflammation of the membrane around the brain and the spinal cord, and meningoencephalitis refers to inflammation of the brain and the membrane surrounding it. Persons older than 50 years of age have the highest risk of severe disease. Treatment involves intensive supportive therapy for more severe cases. Most people who get infected with West Nile virus have either no symptoms or mild symptoms. If you are experiencing symptoms stated above, please contact your physician for testing. There is no vaccine to prevent contraction of the disease.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Most people with the virus have no clinical symptoms of illness, but some may become ill three to 14 days after the bite of an infected mosquito.

This year, one (1) bird has tested positive for the virus in LaSalle County. Ted Pumo, Environmental Health Director, said “this is the time of the year we would expect to see human cases occurring throughout the nation as well as in Illinois. I encourage individuals to take precautions to prevent being bitten by mosquitoes.”

As temperatures drop, mosquito activity does slow down. However, the cold weather needs to be consistently freezing before the threat of West Nile virus can be minimized. The following precautions should be taken to reduce the risk of any mosquito-borne disease.

- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn.
- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt.
- Use mosquito repellent that contains DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- Make sure door and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears

or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.

- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding, including water in bird baths, ponds, flower pots, wading pools, old tires, and any other receptacles.

For further information, please contact the Health Department at 815-433-3366. The complete listing of positive birds, mosquito batches, horses, and humans identified in the county is available on the LaSalle County Health Department's web site at www.lasallecounty.org/hd . A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/wnv.htm.

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**LASALLE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
717 ETNA ROAD
OTTAWA, IL 61350
433-3366**

September 20, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“LaSalle County Health Department’s Flu Clinics to Begin in October”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Leslie Dougherty at 433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department has received its full shipment of influenza (flu) vaccine and will sponsor several vaccination clinics throughout the county. The fee for a flu vaccination this year will be \$20. Billing will be provided for Medicare part B and Public Aid eligible clients who receive the vaccination. Typically, late October through December are the best months to be vaccinated because influenza activity in the United States generally peaks between late December and early March. LaSalle County Health Department supports the Centers for Disease Control recommendation to vaccinate all people, healthy or at risk, age 6 months and up. People who are at high risk for complications from influenza include:

- All children 6-59 months of age.
- Household contacts and out-of-home caretakers of infants from 0-23 months of age.
- People 65 of age and older.
- Residents and employees of long-term care facilities.
- People who have long-term health problems.
- People with certain conditions such as asthma and neuromuscular disorders that can cause breathing problems.
- People with a weakened immune system.
- People 6 months to 18 years of age on long-term aspirin treatment.
- Women who will be pregnant during influenza season.
- People who can spread influenza to those at high risk.

- Physicians, nurses, family members, or anyone else in close contact with people at risk of serious influenza.

A Doctor's order is **NO** longer required for children under 18, but all children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Influenza, commonly called the flu, is caused by viruses that infect the respiratory tract. Typically, symptoms of flu infection include fever, chills, and respiratory symptoms such as cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, and extreme fatigue. The flu is spread easily from person to person, often when an infected person coughs or sneezes and the virus enters another person's body through the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, or mouth. For most, the flu lingers for a week or two and then they recover. For others, the flu can cause serious and potentially life-threatening medical complications, such as pneumonia.

Influenza vaccine contains three strains that represent the flu viruses likely to circulate in the United States in the upcoming winter. This year vaccine will include A/Solomon Islands, A/Wisconsin, and B/Malaysia like strains. The vaccine is highly purified and non-infectious so a person cannot get the flu from the vaccine.

The flu vaccine, which is recommended every year, does not always protect a person from getting the flu. It is 70 to 90 percent effective in preventing influenza among healthy adults, but for those who still get the flu, the symptoms are milder than in those who have not been immunized. To lessen your chances of developing the flu, adults and children need to practice good hygiene measures. Teach the importance of covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing, and educate children about hand to mucous membrane transmission. One of the best ways to protect yourself and your children is through frequent and thorough hand washing. We also recommend you avoid exposing your children to high-risk areas, such as heavily trafficked areas. Parents are also encouraged to keep children exhibiting "flu-like" symptoms home and out of childcare and school to minimize transmission.

This is also a good time for certain individuals to get a pneumonia vaccination. They must check with their physicians to see if one is recommended. Pneumococcal disease caused by bacteria (*Streptococcus pneumonia*) which can cause serious infections. These infections include pneumonia and meningitis and can be prevented by getting a "Pneumonia shot". People who should get a pneumonia shot include:

- All persons aged 65 and older
- Adults and children with chronic illnesses of heart, lung, kidney, or liver
- Diabetics
- All persons with a weak immune system caused by HIV, cancer, organ transplant, immunosuppressive medicine such as corticosteroids, or splenectomy

A pneumonia shot is usually necessary only once for those over the age of 65.

For those under 65 with a chronic illness it is recommended that it be repeated once after five years. People should get the shot even if they have had a pneumonia illness in the past.

The pneumonia vaccine will be available at all of the flu clinic sites. There will be a \$30 fee for the shot. Medicare part B and Medicaid will be billed for eligible clients. A receipt can be given upon request for those who would like to submit it to their insurance company. For more information on influenza you may visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd. For the flu/pneumonia clinic sites/schedules [Click Here](#).

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**LASALLE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
717 ETNA ROAD
OTTAWA, IL 61350
433-3366**

September 13, 2007

“Quilt Raffle Tickets Available”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL -- The LaSalle County Health Department is pleased to announce that the Illinois Valley Quilter's Guild has donated another beautiful quilt to the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer program.

Each year the Illinois Valley Quilter's Guild designs and creates a quilt to be raffled off to the community. All proceeds from this quilt raffle are generously donated to the LaSalle County Health Department's Breast and Cervical Cancer Program. Tickets for the quilt are available at the Health Department and are \$1.00 for one ticket or \$5.00 for six. The goal of this program is to reduce mortality from breast and cervical cancer by offering screening services such as mammograms and pap smears. All of the funds provided by the Illinois Valley Quilter's Guild quilt will be used for LaSalle and Grundy County women, of low to moderate income, who are non-insured or underinsured.

For more information regarding breast cancer and your health, make a donation or to see if you qualify, contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366, (800)247-5243 or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
815-433-3366

September 7, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“Another Bat Tests Positive for Rabies in LaSalle County”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS: contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 815-433-3366 or LaSalle County Animal Control at 815-434-8661

OTTAWA, IL – LaSalle County Health Department officials have recently received a report indicating that a bat submitted from LaSalle County tested positive for rabies. The bat was submitted from the Mendota area. Currently, in 2007, more than 80 bats have tested positive for rabies in Illinois.

Due to continuing evidence that bats are the primary carrier of rabies in Illinois, the LaSalle County Health Department is reminding the public to avoid contact with bats. Recent flooding has increased the mosquito population, which in turn has people seeing more bat activity.

Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals, and is transmitted from the bite of an infected animal or if infectious material from a rabid animal, such as saliva or brain tissue, gets directly into their eyes, nose, mouth or an open wound, such as an abrasion, scrape, or cut. The rabies virus cannot be spread through the urine, feces, or blood of a bat. **Rabies is a fatal disease if anti-rabies treatment is not administered before symptoms begin.** Post-exposure treatment is a 5 to 6 dose vaccination series given over a 30-day period. There is an average of one or two cases of rabies in the United States each year, but no human cases have occurred in Illinois since 1954.

Any wild mammal, like a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote or bat, can have rabies and transmit it to people. Changes in the animal’s normal behavior, difficulty with walking, or an overall appearance of illness can be early signs of rabies. The animal does not need to be foaming at the mouth or exhibiting rabies symptoms. Specifically, bats that are active during the day, found in a place where bats are not usually seen, such as lawn or home, or is unable to fly is more likely to be rabid. These bats are often very easy to approach, but should never be handled.

The following tips from the Illinois Department of Public Health should be followed to prevent the spread of rabies:

Be a responsible pet owner:

- Keep vaccinations up-to-date for all dogs, cats, and ferrets. This requirement is important to not only keep your pets from getting rabies, but also to provide a barrier of protection for you, if your animal is bitten by a rabid animal.
- Keep your pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal or exposed to a bat, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately.
- Call your local animal control agency or local police department to remove stray animals in your neighborhood.
- Spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.

Avoid direct contact with unfamiliar animals:

- Enjoy wild animals (raccoons, skunks, foxes) from afar. Do not handle, feed or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home. Do not try to nurse sick animals to health. Call animal control or a veterinarian for assistance.
- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild, or domestic, even if they appear friendly. “Love your own, leave other animals alone” is a good principle for children to learn.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools and other similar areas, where they might come in contact with people or pets.

For further questions and additional information, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or LaSalle County Animal Control at 815-434-8661. Additional information is available on the LaSalle County Health Department's web site at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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**LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
815-433-3366**

September 5, 2007

News Release

“Crow Tests Positive for West Nile virus in LaSalle County”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION; contact Jenny Barrie or Leslie Dougherty at 815-433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department reported that a crow found August 28th in Ottawa has tested positive for West Nile virus by the Illinois Department of Agriculture Laboratory in Galesburg. This is the first documented West Nile virus activity in the county for 2007.

The LaSalle County Health Department is also testing mosquitoes, again this year. Mosquitoes are tested for West Nile virus and St Louis encephalitis. The mosquito collection and testing equipment was purchased with grant money. Also, with the grant money the health department was able to purchase a large quantity of mosquito larvicide. Larvicide is used to treat potential mosquito breeding sites, and was distributed to licensed mosquito control applicators from local municipalities and villages throughout the county.

The best way to prevent West Nile disease or any other mosquito-borne illness is to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your home and to take personal precautions to avoid mosquito bites. Precautions include:

- Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are most active, especially between dusk and dawn. Use prevention methods whenever mosquitoes are present.
- When outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, and apply insect repellent that includes DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- Make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut, especially at night.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires and any other receptacles. In communities where there are organized mosquito control programs, contact your municipal government to report areas of stagnant water in roadside ditches, flooded yards and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes.

The LaSalle County Health Department would like to remind the general public to report any dead crows, blue jays, robins, or potential mosquito breeding sites to the Health Department at 815-433-3366. A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecounty.org/hd . A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at www.idph.state.il.us. Go to the West Nile virus page and select "2007" under surveillance. In addition, the Illinois Department of Public Health has activated the West Nile virus hotline again this year. The number is 866-369-9710 (toll-free) and is available Monday through Friday from 8am-5pm.

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**LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Rd.
Ottawa, IL 61350
(815) 433-3366**

September 5, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“Fifteenth Annual Food Service Seminar”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS: contact Jenny Barrie 815-433-3366

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department will be sponsoring their Fifteenth Annual Food Service Seminar on September 10, 2007. The seminar will be held at Pitstick Pavilion, Rt. 23, Ottawa. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Registration is from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The seminar will begin at 8:30 a.m. and will conclude at approximately 12:15 p.m. Speakers include Connie Brooks and Chris Pozzi from the LaSalle County Health Department who will present information on handling emergencies in food establishments, Patricia Welch from the Illinois Department of Public Health who will discuss food safety issues, Patrick McGarry from the Illinois Department of Public Health who will discuss Smoke-Free Illinois, and Jamie Burns from the Illinois Department of Public Health who will present information on Handling difficult customers with tact and skill. For more information or to pre-register, call the LaSalle County Health Department at (815) 433-3366.

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LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
(815) 433-3366

August 31, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“Tetanus Vaccinations Available in LaSalle”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS: contact Jenny Barrie or Leslie Dougherty at 815-433-3366

OTTAWA, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department will offer a tetanus clinic in LaSalle on Tuesday, September 4th from 4pm-6pm. Anyone who has been exposed to flood water is encouraged to receive a vaccination. The vaccinations will be free of charge and on a walk-in basis. The clinic will be at the LaSalle WIC site located at 68 3rd Street, LaSalle. For more information on flood precautions, please contact LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit the Health Department’s website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
(815) 433-3366

August 29, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“Tetanus Vaccinations Still Available”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS: contact Jenny Barrie or Leslie Dougherty at 815-433-3366

OTTAWA, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department will continue to offer tetanus vaccinations to people affected by the flood through Friday, August 31st. Anyone who has been exposed to flood water is encouraged to receive a vaccination. The vaccinations will be free of charge and on a walk-in basis. Additionally, the Health Department will extend their hours on Thursday, August 30th until 6pm. This will help accommodate anyone still in need of a vaccination. The LaSalle County Health Department is located at 717 Etna Road in Ottawa and regular business hours are 8:00am-4:30pm. For more information on flood precautions, please contact LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit the Health Department’s website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
(815) 433-3366

August 24, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES FOR AREAS AFFECTED WITH FLOOD WATERS”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS: contact Jenny Barrie or Leslie Dougherty at 815-433-3366

OTTAWA, IL – Due to the recent flooding in LaSalle County, the LaSalle County Health Department recommends the following precautionary measures be taken when dealing with flood water. If you have been exposed to flood water and have not had a tetanus booster in the last ten years the Health Department will be offering tetanus shots on Tuesday, August 28th from 9:00am-3:00pm at 717 Etna Road, Ottawa. These vaccinations will be free of charge and on a walk-in basis.

Homeowners with private water wells affected by the flood water need to disinfect their water wells in order to ensure that their water is safe for consumption and use. Until disinfection of the well is completed and verified, only bottled water and/or water that has been brought to a rolling boil for 3 to 5 minutes should be used. Disinfecting procedures vary according to the type of well located on the property and can be found on the Health Department’s website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd. Any homeowner with a well that has been affected by flood water should contact the LaSalle County Health Department for free water sampling after all disinfecting and pumping procedures have been completed in order to verify a safe water supply.

Also, the LaSalle County Health Department must be notified by all food and food related retail establishments who have been affected by the recent flooding. The Health Department will assist owners/operators of these establishments with appropriate cleaning methods and proper disposal of potentially contaminated products. The Health Department will assist in documentation of these contaminated products or to help determine which products may be salvaged. Examples of products that could pose public health risks if contaminated are food products, paper products, and pharmaceutical products. Food establishments that have had electrical outages due to the flood should also notify the Health Department to assure that food products are being held at temperatures which inhibit bacterial growth.

For more information on these precautions, please contact LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366.

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**LASALLE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
717 ETNA ROAD
OTTAWA, IL 61350
433-3366**

August 1, 2007

N E W S R E L E A S E

“Syphilis Cases on the Rise”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL -- In 2007 LaSalle County has had a significant increase in the number of confirmed syphilis cases – 2 of which have been identified within the last month. To date in 2007 we have had 3 confirmed cases of syphilis, with multiple partners being treated. This increase causes great concern since this is the highest number of cases we have had in almost ten years. In addition, IDPH has confirmed a case in a neighboring county.

Syphilis can be treated effectively with antibiotics, typically with penicillin, administered by injection. If untreated, syphilis in its late stages can cause serious heart abnormalities, mental disorders, blindness, other neurological problems and death. Untreated syphilis in pregnancy can result in severe congenital complications to the fetus.

The first symptom of syphilis is a sore called a chancre, which can appear within 10 days to three months after exposure but generally within three weeks. Because the chancre is usually painless and sometimes occurs inside the body, it may go unnoticed. The chancre will disappear within a few weeks which will be followed by the second stage which is marked by a skin rash.

The people at increased risk for syphilis, like those at high risk for other STDs, are those who have had multiple sex partners, have had sex with an infected partner, have been infected with STDs in the past and those who do not use condoms. Those who have a current STD or have had a previous STD should also be tested for HIV infection. The LaSalle County Health Department offers free anonymous and confidential HIV testing. Those at risk should contact the Health Department at 433-3366. In addition, the

LaSalle County Health Department can make referrals for county residents to get tested and treated for syphilis as well as other STDs at 3 clinics in the county. For more information on syphilis or other STDs contact us or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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**LASALLE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
717 ETNA ROAD
OTTAWA, IL 61350**

433-3366

August 1, 2007

“WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL—The LaSalle County Health Department would like to inform the public that “World Breastfeeding Week” is August 1st -7th. This years theme is Breastfeeding the 1st Hour- Welcome Baby Softly. Research is clear that breastfeeding is the optimal nutrition and the perfect life-sustaining food for babies. The theme celebrates the importance of early closeness between mother and baby in the first hour or two after birth.

Breastmilk gives babies all the nutrients they need for the first 6 months of life and helps protect them from infection and diseases. It also provides many benefits to the mother as well, like helping to protect against breast and ovarian cancers, and weak bones later in life. Not to mention that it also helps the mother get to her pre-pregnancy shape faster.

Breastfeeding also allows you and your baby to get closer- physically and emotionally. So while your child is feeding, the bond between you can grow stronger. All the while you will be helping to protect your baby from ear infections, gastro-intestinal infections, chest infections, urinary tract infections, childhood diabetes, eczema, obesity, and asthma.

In recognition of our breastfeeding WIC moms, the LaSalle County Health Department will be raffling a special basket at each of our WIC sites. The basket winners name will be drawn and be distributed at the end of August at each of the sites. We encourage and congratulate all breastfeeding moms on making the best possible choice for your baby! For more information on breastfeeding you can contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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**LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350**

815-433-3366

July 31, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“Preparing for a Pandemic Flu in the Workplace”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR INFORMATION, please contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 815-433-3366

OTTAWA, IL –Businesses and employers have an important role in ensuring national pandemic preparedness and response. Much of the nation’s critical infrastructure is in the hands of the business community, which means employers will be in the position of protecting the health and safety of their employee’s. The effects of a pandemic outbreak can be minimized if actions are taken before hand to prepare.

Workplaces could be affected by absenteeism, commerce pattern changes, and interruptions in supply and delivery procedures. It is estimated that workplaces could see a 40-50% decrease in employee attendance. The fear of coming to work and getting exposed, child care issues, caring for ill family members, or ill employees could all be factors in decreased attendance.

Every employer can take the following prevention steps to try to keep their employees healthy:

*Encourage sick employees to stay home

*Encourage good hygiene practices (hand washing, cough/sneeze etiquette)

*Avoid close contact when possible (at least 6 feet)

*Keep work surfaces clean

*Discourage sharing of phones, desks, computers, etc.

*Minimize crowded situations (meeting, etc.)

Furthermore, employers can help protect their business by developing a disaster plan and developing a sick leave policy that encourages sick employees to stay home. Preparing for any emergency situation or disaster will help bring confidence and peace of mind during the event.

For more information on pandemic flu, please call the Health Department at 815-433-3366.

Pandemic flu information is also available at www.pandemicflu.gov , www.cdc.gov/flu, www.osha.gov, or www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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**LASALLE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
717 ETNA ROAD
OTTAWA, IL 61350**

433-3366

JUNE 19, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS, contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366.

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department would like to announce that we now offer rapid testing for HIV. The Ora Quick test for HIV gives a person their results in approximately 30 minutes, making HIV testing easier, more accessible and less invasive than ever before. National Testing Day is on Wednesday, June 27th and the LaSalle County Health Department will be offering the rapid Ora Quick HIV test to the public as part of National HIV Testing Day. This years theme is Educate, Motivate, and Mobilize against HIV/AIDS. This is the 13th annual HIV Testing Day campaign. The goal of the campaign is to identify people who are HIV positive and don't know it so they can access treatment. Appointments will not be necessary and all walk-ins will be welcome.

There is an estimated quarter of a million Americans who are infected with HIV but are not aware of it. While we have made tremendous strides in treating HIV disease and related infections, those advances mean little to someone who doesn't know they are infected. If you have ever had unprotected sex with someone who uses injectable drugs, if you have ever shared needles, if you are a man who has ever had sex with another man, or if you have other factors that put you at risk for HIV infection, you should consider getting an HIV test.

The LaSalle County Health Department offers free anonymous or confidential HIV counseling and testing. If you are not available on June 27th and would like to schedule an appointment to be tested or learn more information about HIV, contact Andy at 433-3366 or 1-800-247-5243. You can also access our website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
815-433-3366

June 11, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“Bat Tests Positive for Rabies in LaSalle County”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS: contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 815-433-3366 or LaSalle County Animal Control at 815-434-8661

OTTAWA, IL – Due to continuing evidence that bats are the primary carrier of rabies in Illinois, the LaSalle County Health Department is reminding the public to avoid contact with bats.

Currently, in 2007, fourteen (14) bats have tested positive for rabies in Illinois. LaSalle County Health Department officials have recently received a report indicating that a bat submitted from LaSalle County tested positive for rabies. The bat was submitted from the Earlville area.

Rabies is an infectious viral disease that affects the nervous system of humans and other mammals. It is transmitted from the bite of an infected animal or when infectious material from a rabid animal, such as saliva or brain tissue, gets directly into the eyes, nose, mouth or an open wound, such as an abrasion, scrape, or cut of a human or other mammal. The rabies virus cannot be spread through the urine, feces, or blood of a bat. **Rabies is a fatal disease if anti-rabies treatment is not administered before symptoms begin.** Post-exposure treatment is a 5 to 6 dose vaccination series given over a 30-day period. There is an average of one or two cases of rabies in the United States each year, but no human cases have occurred in Illinois since 1954.

Any wild mammal, like a raccoon, skunk, fox, coyote or bat, can have rabies and transmit it to people. Changes in the animal’s normal behavior, difficulty with walking, or an overall appearance of illness can be early signs of rabies. The animal does not need to be foaming at the mouth or exhibiting rabies symptoms. Specifically, bats that are active during the day, found in a place where bats are not usually seen, such as lawn or home, or is unable to fly is more likely to be rabid. These bats are often very easy to approach, but should never be handled.

The following tips from the Illinois Department of Public Health should be followed to prevent the spread of rabies:

Be a responsible pet owner:

- Keep vaccinations up-to-date for all dogs, cats, and ferrets. This requirement is important to not only keep your pets from getting rabies, but also to provide a barrier of protection for you, if your animal is bitten by a rabid animal.
- Keep your pets under direct supervision so they do not come in contact with wild animals. If your pet is bitten by a wild animal or exposed to a bat, seek veterinary assistance for the animal immediately.
- Call your local animal control agency or local police department to remove stray animals in your neighborhood.
- Spay or neuter your pets to help reduce the number of unwanted pets that may not be properly cared for or regularly vaccinated.

Avoid direct contact with unfamiliar animals:

- Enjoy wild animals (raccoons, skunks, foxes) from afar. Do not handle, feed or unintentionally attract wild animals with open garbage cans or litter.
- Never adopt wild animals or bring them into your home. Do not try to nurse sick animals to health. Call animal control or a veterinarian for assistance.
- Teach children never to handle unfamiliar animals, wild, or domestic, even if they appear friendly. “Love your own, leave other animals alone” is a good principle for children to learn.
- Prevent bats from entering living quarters or occupied spaces in homes, churches, schools and other similar areas, where they might come in contact with people or pets.

For further questions and additional information, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or LaSalle County Animal Control at 815-434-8661.

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LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
815-433-3366

May 15, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“Area Restaurants Added to the Illinois Smoke-free Restaurant Recognition Program”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS: contact Jenny Barrie or Leslie Dougherty at 433-3366.

Ottawa, IL -- The LaSalle County Health Department has, through the Illinois Smoke-Free Restaurant Identification Program, identified sixteen area establishments that classify themselves as smoke-free. The following list notes the additions:

In LaSalle, Chan's Garden is smoke-free.

In Marseilles, Victoria Grace Catering is smoke-free.

In Oglesby, Delaney's Family Restaurant is smoke-free.

In Ottawa, Beyond the Grapevine Inc., Fox River Bed and Breakfast, Old Town Commons, Quiznos Sub, and Thorntons have been identified as smoke-free.

In Peru, Fourth Street Café and Bakery, Peru Pizza House, Quiznos Sub, and Starbuck's Coffee have been identified as smoke-free.

In Streator, KFC/Long John Silvers and McGrath's Seafoods have been identified as smoke-free.

In Utica, August Hill Winery and Subway are smoke-free.

The LaSalle County Health Department would like to offer our congratulations to these restaurants, and will be presenting each establishment with a framed certificate from the Illinois Department of Public Health.

To view a complete listing of smoke-free restaurants in LaSalle County, visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org. To qualify, restaurants must not allow smoking in any part of the facility. If an area establishment has had a change in their smoking status, please feel free to contact the LaSalle County Health Department. To request pamphlets on smoke-free dining or for more information on the Illinois Smoke-Free Restaurant Recognition Program, please contact the Health Department at (815) 433-3366.

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LASALLE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
815-433-3366

May 1, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“Local Agencies Attend Pandemic Preparedness Seminar”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; please contact Jenny Barrie or Leslie Dougherty at 815-433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL – On April 17, 2007 the LaSalle County Pandemic Planning Committee sponsored a Pandemic Preparedness Seminar. The seminar was held at Illinois Valley Community College in the Cultural Center from 2:00-4:00pm. The purpose of the seminar was to inform community stakeholders about preparedness activities and resources that would benefit their organizations.

Four organizations provided guest speakers for the seminar. Judy Conway from the Illinois Department of Public Health spoke on pandemic influenza planning and personal protective equipment. Mike Jobst from LaSalle County Emergency Management provided information on current planning efforts in the County. Next, Sarah Stasik and Peggy Burash with the Illinois Valley Chapter of the American Red Cross presented information focusing on personal preparedness planning. The last speaker, Christine Guisti from Illinois Valley Center for Independent Living spoke on special needs populations. Approximately, 60 individuals from agencies throughout LaSalle County attended the seminar. Some of those represented were local elected officials, media, funeral directors, area healthcare agencies, law enforcement, and fire officials.

For more information on pandemic flu, please call the Health Department at 815-433-3366. Pandemic flu information is also available at www.pandemicflu.gov, www.cdc.gov/flu, or www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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**LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
815-433-3366**

April 27, 2007

News Release

“LaSalle County Health Department Begins Dead Bird Surveillance”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Jenny Barrie or Leslie Dougherty at 433-3366.

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department will begin collecting dead birds on May 1, 2007 and will continue this process through October 15, 2007. Dead crows, blue jays, and robins are important sentinels for early detection of West Nile virus activity. During the past five years, West Nile virus activity has been documented throughout LaSalle County. LaSalle County citizens should report any deceased crow, blue jay, or robin to the Environmental Division at 815-433-3366.

Birds submitted for testing should be “eligible birds” that have no obvious cause of death such as being found crushed in a roadway and most likely killed by a motor vehicle, or birds killed by a gunshot. Birds submitted should be believed to be dead for less than 48 hours. Birds should only be submitted if they have not been damaged by scavenging animals and are not decomposed. Decomposed animals can be recognized as having a strong odor present, eyes deflated or dried, maggots present or bloated from decomposition gases.

The following information may be useful in helping to distinguishing crows from other birds with black feathers:

Crows can be confused with other birds with black feathers such as starlings, grackles, blackbirds and cowbirds. Adult crows are larger, about 17-21 inches in length, while juvenile crows are about 10 inches in length. Adult crows are all black including feathers, beak, legs, and feet. Juvenile crows have brownish-black feathers. The crow’s nostrils are covered with bristles.

Grackles are 11 inches to 13 inches long, also black, smaller than crows but larger than robins. The head of a grackle has a purple or green iridescent sheen. The rest of the body is black or brown-black. The eyes are yellow. They can also be distinguished from crows because their tails are V-shaped and tail feathers are nearly as long as the body.

Health Department staff is also getting ready to begin testing mosquitoes, the vector for West Nile virus and St. Louis encephalitis, again this year. The mosquito collection and testing equipment was purchased with grant money. The Health Department was also able to use the grant money to purchase a

large quantity of mosquito larvicide. Larvicide is used to treat potential mosquito breeding sites, and will be distributed to licensed mosquito control applicators from local municipalities and villages throughout the county.

Also, during the spring and summer months, Health Department staff extend outreach efforts to all city, municipal, village, and township officials in the county. Information packets will be distributed to local hospitals, medical centers, nursing homes, pharmacies, veterinary clinics, pet shelters, campgrounds, daycares, libraries, and pool supply companies.

For additional information on West Nile virus, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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**LASALLE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
717 ETNA ROAD
OTTAWA, IL 61350
433-3366**

March 29, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

"LaSalle County Health Department Celebrates National Public Health Week"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Jenny Barrie or Leslie Dougherty at 433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL - The LaSalle County Health Department would like to announce National Public Health Week is April 2-8th, 2007. In celebration of National Public Health Week, the LaSalle County Health Department will be offering free blood pressure screenings at the Health Department all week from 8am-4:30pm. The theme of this year's National Public Health Week is "Preparedness and Public Health Threats: Addressing the Unique Needs of the Nation's Vulnerable Populations". Health Department staff is also encouraging the public when getting their blood pressure checked to pick up educational materials focusing on emergency preparedness, which will be available in the lobby.

The LaSalle County Health Department was created in November of 1986 with the passage of a referendum by the voters of LaSalle County. In 1987, the Health Department began offering programs in three areas: environmental health, personal health, and health education. Programs available at the Health Department focus on the prevention of the spread of disease and food borne illness, elimination of potentially harmful environmental situations, protection of groundwater from contamination, prevention of injuries, promotion of healthy behaviors, preparedness to respond to bioterrorism issues, and assurance of access to quality health services. For further questions and additional information, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or 1-800-247-5243. The department's website can be accessed at www.lasallecounty.org/hd, and contains beneficial health information.

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LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
815-433-3366

February 14, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

"Larvicide 1-Hour Training"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS: contact Jenny Barrie or Leslie Dougherty at 433-3366

OTTAWA, IL – The Bureau and Putnam County Health Departments in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Public Health, and the LaSalle County Health Department is offering a 1-hour larvicide training seminar, March 22, 2007, from 10am to 12pm in the conference room at the Bureau County Health Department.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA) Rule allows application of a pre-packaged solid mosquito larvicide by persons who attend a 1-hour training seminar.

THIS SEMINAR IS FREE.

If you would like to attend, please contact the Bureau County Health Department at **815-872-5091, extension 10.**

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**LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350**

815-433-3366

February 7, 2007

NEWS RELEASE

“Preparing for a Pandemic Flu Outbreak”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR INFORMATION, please contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 815-433-3366

OTTAWA, IL –The effects of a pandemic outbreak can be minimized if actions are taken before hand to prepare. Preparing for any emergency situation or disaster will help bring confidence and peace of mind during the event. One of the most important issues regarding pandemic flu is being prepared at home. If you have a plan in place to take care of your family, including pets any additional challenges may not seem as difficult. As you and your family prepare and plan for a pandemic, think about the challenges you might face. It is possible essential services might be disrupted. A pandemic flu outbreak could cause a major impact on society as potential restrictions are placed on travel, schools, and businesses. Therefore, the following checklist has been developed to help with individual and family planning efforts. These items would be extremely beneficial to place in a family emergency kit:

*Store a two week supply of water and food. For example:

-Bottled water

-Canned juices

-Ready-to-eat canned meats, fish, fruits, vegetables, beans, and soups

-Canned or jarred baby food and formula

-Crackers

-Dried fruit

-Peanut butter or nuts

-Dry cereal or granola

-Protein bars or fruit bars

-Pet food and supplies

*Store medical and emergency supplies:

-Ask your doctor and insurance company if you can get an extra supply of your regular prescription drugs

-Have non-prescription drugs and other health supplies on hand. For example:

*soap and water, or alcohol-based hand sanitizer

*pain relievers

*stomach remedies

*cough and cold medications

*fluid with electrolytes

*vitamins

-Thermometer

-Flashlight

-Batteries

-Portable radio

-Manual can opener

-Garbage bags

-Tissues, toilet paper, disposable diapers

For more information on pandemic flu, please call the Health Department at 815-433-3366. Pandemic flu information is also available at www.pandemicflu.gov , www.cdc.gov/flu, or www.lasallecounty.org/hd.

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**LASALLE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
717 ETNA ROAD
OTTAWA, IL 61350
433-3366**

JANUARY 4, 2007

“ CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING MONTH “

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Leslie Dougherty at 433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL-- The LaSalle County Health Department would like to announce that January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. The goal of this month is to educate and empower women across America to visit their physician for a regular Pap smear test. Every year approximately 10,500 women in the United States are diagnosed with cervical cancer, and there are approximately 3,500 deaths from the disease. It is extremely important that women receive regular Pap smear tests because cervical cancer, when caught early, is nearly 100 percent curable.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) reports that between 60 and 80 percent of American women with newly diagnosed invasive cervical cancer have not had a Pap smear in the last five years and may have never had one. Cervical Cancer is one of the most common types of cancer worldwide, and one of the most preventable and treatable.

The LaSalle County Health Department has a program available, which can pay for Pap Smear tests for those women who qualify. We invite and encourage anyone who needs more information on cervical cancer and the importance of Pap smear tests to contact the Health Department at 433-3366 or 1-800-247-5243 or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org/hd .

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