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For Immediate Release

Get ahead of respiratory illness season with flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines

Belleville – Respiratory illnesses, including flu, have arrived early this year. Healthcare partners across Hastings and Prince Edward counties are encouraging residents to get their flu, COVID-19 and RSV vaccines to reduce their risk of serious illness.

Quinte Health, Hastings-Quinte Community Paramedics, Southeast Public Health and the Hastings Prince Edward Ontario Health Team (HPEOHT) are working together to help residents access vaccines in their communities.

"Getting your flu and COVID-19 vaccines is one of the simplest steps you can take to protect yourself and those around you this respiratory illness season," said Dr. Sarah LeBlanc, family physician and Primary Care Network co-lead. "Vaccination can reduce your risk of serious illness, and there are several convenient ways to get vaccinated in our community. I encourage residents to check their eligibility and make a plan to get vaccinated."

RSV prevention is also available for eligible Ontarians. Ontario's publicly funded RSV vaccine is available to all adults aged 75 and older, as well as adults aged 60 to 74 who meet certain high-risk criteria. Protection against RSV is also available for eligible infants and high-risk children, as well as during pregnancy. Residents are encouraged to speak with their health care provider or visit the Ontario Ministry of Health website to learn more about RSV prevention options and eligibility.

Many pharmacies across Hastings and Prince Edward counties have now received the flu and COVID-19 vaccines for their residents. The Ministry of Health's participating pharmacies web page provides a list of pharmacies offering vaccinations across the province. Southeast Public Health provides details on vaccine eligibility on the SEPH website.

For people who are homebound and connected with Ontario Health atHome or Hastings-Quinte Community Paramedics, vaccination at home may be available. This option can help remove transportation barriers for people who are unable to leave their homes.

The ongoing spread of flu, COVID-19 and RSV may cause more serious illnesses in older adults, young children, and people with weakened immune systems. Vaccination is one of the best ways to protect vulnerable people within our communities.

Sickness still happens – do you know where to go?

Vaccination is an important step in protecting yourself and others during respiratory illness season, but people may still become sick and need care. Knowing where to go for non-urgent care can help people get the care they need while keeping emergency departments available for people who need emergency treatment.

HPE OHT encourages residents to use Quinte Health's Know Where to Go resources to find the right place for non-urgent care based on their health needs.

For urgent or life-threatening concerns, call 9-1-1 or go to your nearest emergency department.

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