

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

01/26/2015

www.nwhealth.org

Receive the Zostavax vaccine, reduce your risk of shingles and long-term pain
Shingles vaccine only \$10 at the Health Department for eligible clients

CHARLEVOIX – In the United States, one million people get shingles every year, and about one out of every three people will get shingles in their lifetime.

Fortunately, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan has the shingles vaccine, known as Zostavax, in stock. At the Health Department, clients ages 60 years old and older may be eligible to receive Zostavax for only \$10 if they're uninsured, or if their insurance does not cover the vaccine. People interested in the vaccine should verify coverage with their insurance providers; if insurance covers any portion of the cost, they are not eligible for the reduced fee. Those with Medicare Part B only and no Prescription (Part D) coverage may be eligible to receive the discount.

Yvonne Louiselle, Public Health Nurse at the Health Department, said the vaccine is a one-dose shot that may prevent shingles altogether. "Everyone who had chickenpox is vulnerable to shingles," she explained, which is why receiving the vaccination is so important. "Zostavax will help reduce your risk of shingles and the long-term pain it can cause."

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend the shingles vaccine for people age 60 years and older, even if they've already had the virus. Zostavax reduces the risk of developing shingles by half and significantly lowers the chance of suffering complications like extreme pain.

Shingles, also known as zoster or herpes zoster, is a painful skin rash caused by the varicella zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox. Shingles usually develops on one side of the body, often the face or torso. The rash forms blisters that typically scab over in 7 to 10 days and clears up within 2 to 4 weeks. The most common complication of shingles is severe pain, which

can last for months or even years. Some patients may suffer from multiple episodes of shingles.

“Shingles can be more than a temporary inconvenience,” said Louiselle. “Complications from the virus can seriously de-rail your life.”

For more information about Zostavax, please contact your health care provider or the Health Department. To schedule an immunization appointment at the Health Department, call **(800) 432-4121**.

Visit HYPERLINK "<http://www.nwhealth.org/>" www.nwhealth.org to learn more about the Health Department’s services. The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego Counties.

CONTACT:

Dan Reynolds
(231) 547-7629
d.reynolds@nwhealth.org