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## **DuPage County Health Department seeks partnerships To expand influenza vaccinations for next flu season**

The DuPage County Health Department is proposing an innovative public health program to seek community partnerships and better serve DuPage County residents with greater access to influenza vaccinations during the next flu season in 2007-2008.

The health department, in a presentation to the DuPage County Board of Health on March 8, announced plans to seek partnerships with community pharmacies during the 2007-2008 flu season to administer flu vaccine throughout DuPage County.

These community partnerships would increase access to flu vaccine, increase availability of flu information, expand the marketing of health department services and broaden the safety net of protection from influenza.

The health department would provide information on its services to the pharmacies, promote flu vaccine recommendations from the federal Centers for Disease Control, expand flu information on the health department's website, [www.dupagehealth.org](http://www.dupagehealth.org) and develop a flu vaccine hotline to assist residents with information and access to vaccine.

This innovative approach is "A collaboration model with private partners with the goal of maximizing the access and education objectives of the health department's influenza program," said Jane Zimmerman, acting director of Community Health Services for the health department.

This improved access to flu vaccine would minimize past barriers such as inconvenience, transportation, cost, quality and availability.

The health department's mission, noted Linda Kurzawa, board of health president, "is to protect the public against influenza. This is an important step."

The health department currently distributes vaccine during clinics at its four public health centers, a senior citizen fair and to at-risk people in group settings without medical staff access. The health department during the most recent flu season administered approximately 7,754 vaccinations and 10,600 flu shots were purchased by the agency.

The health department will continue to target adults, special populations and children through the state's Vaccines for Children program in this new partnership arrangement.

*"We promote health, prevent illness, and provide quality service"*