

Louise Got Her Flu Shot and You Should too! *Earlier is Better to Prevent the Flu*

November 3, 2016 – Getting your free flu shot early is the best way you can help protect yourself, your family, and the people you care for.

Louise Paquette is the CEO of the North East Local Health Integration Network (NE LHIN), as well as a mother of three and a grandmother of two. She's taken precautions to protect herself, her family and her work peers.

While engaging with the region's five public health units last week, Louise took a few minutes away from the meeting to get her flu shot so that she's ready for this year's flu season.

"I do this every year, but often don't get around to it until later in the season," Louise said. "However, while talking about ways the LHIN and public health can work more closely together, Dr. Sutcliffe reminded me that earlier is better when it comes to the flu shot."

This year, older adults, parents of young children and pregnant mothers are being urged to protect themselves and their loved ones by getting the flu shot early. For pregnant women, getting vaccinated not only protects them, but also their babies for the first six months of life.

The influenza or the flu, is a contagious respiratory infection that is caused by a virus. In Canada, it generally occurs in the late fall and winter months – known as the flu season. It is estimated that the flu causes 12,200 hospitalizations and 3,500 deaths in Canada each year.

Some people have a higher risk of complications, such as pneumonia, or hospitalizations from the flu including: seniors; children under five-years old; pregnant women; people with underlying health conditions; and indigenous people.

Flu shots are available through your primary care providers, local public health units, pharmacies, and workplace wellness clinics. Children, between the ages of six months to four



North East LHIN CEO Louise Paquette receives a flu shot while chatting with Dr. Penny Sutcliffe, Medical Officer of Health for the Sudbury and District Health Unit and Acting Medical Officer for Algoma Public Health.

years, can only be vaccinated at a primary health care provider's office (your family doctor or nurse practitioner) or local health unit. To find out the nearest place to get your free flu shot, check out this interactive map at www.ontario.ca/page/get-flu-shot as well as other facts.

For more information contact: Lara Bradley, NE LHIN Communications Officer at 705-674-1492 or by email at lara.bradley@lhins.on.ca

Background:

- There are five public health units within the NE LHIN: Algoma Public Health, North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, Porcupine Health Unit, Sudbury & District Health Unit, Timiskaming Health Unit.
- Population health – defined as the health outcomes of a particular community – is a core responsibility of local public health units in Ontario.
- The NE LHIN and the region's public health units are looking at ways to work more closely together to improve the health of Northerners.
- Dr. Penny Sutcliffe, Medical Officer of Health for Sudbury & District as well as Acting Medical Officer of Health for Algoma Public Health, and Dr. Ariella Zbar, Associate Medical Officer for Sudbury, have recently become members of the NE LHIN's Health Professional Advisory Committee – an advisory committee to the NE LHIN Board of Directors.