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News Release NEWS RELEASE

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Red Cross Urges Families and Communities to Prepare

Nearly two-thirds of Americans plan on getting vaccinated against H1N1 Flu

Howell, October 6, 2009 — A recent poll on the H1N1 flu conducted by the American Red Cross found that more Americans are taking or planning on taking extra measures to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue (78 percent) or wash their hands more carefully (76 percent) to avoid getting the flu. The survey also found that 62 percent plan on being vaccinated against this new flu virus if one is offered.

Washing hands and paying close attention to symptoms of illness are just some of the public can do to help reduce the risk of H1N1 outbreak. “This is a serious situation that has the potential to spread, and it is a good time for families, businesses and organizations to follow good health practices and review their preparedness plans,” said Diane Serra, Executive Director of the Livingston County Chapter. “Taking steps to prepare will go a long way to making families feel safer.”

If families are asked to stay home during this outbreak, it is important to have a plan and supplies in place before that happens. The Red Cross recommends: Stock extra food, water and supplies at home to reduce the need to go out should the H1N1 flu become more widespread, limiting the potential for exposure to the virus. Be sure to include household necessities such as laundry detergent, toilet paper, etc. Select foods that are easy to prepare and store. Make sure that you have an adequate supply of essential medications and medical items for all family members. Include non-prescription medications as well in your supplies.

Plan for what you would do if you had to stay home for a period of time. Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they get sick. Find out your employer’s plans to keep the business open if key staff can’t come to work. Ask your child’s school or day care if there are plans to encourage sick children to stay home to reduce the spread of disease. For more tips on how to prepare your family visit www.redcross.org, www.lchd.org or www.cdc.gov/flu.

Partnering in Preparedness – The American Red Cross, Livingston County Central Dispatch, Livingston County EMS, St. Joseph Mercy Livingston Hospital, Livingston County Department of Public Health.