

County expands vaccination clinics

All healthy people 4 to 24 eligible for free H1N1 shot

By **KRISTEN SENZ**
Senior Writer

The Greater Sullivan County Public Health Network is expanding the availability of free H1N1 vaccines to all healthy people ages 4 to 24 and is offering two clinics in the region next week.

Public health network coordinator Jessica McAuliff said Thursday that some areas in New Hampshire have moved to "Tier III" of a state plan to distribute flu shots to people with

the highest risk of becoming seriously ill if they were to contract the H1N1 flu virus, also known as swine flu.

The expanded distribution means network health providers will set up school-based flu clinics for children ages 4 through 17 and public clinics for children and adults ages 18 to 24. Additionally, healthcare workers, pregnant women and their partners and caregivers of children under 6 months and their partners remain eligible for the free flu shots, McAuliff said.

"The state of New

Hampshire is releasing the vaccine in a very systematic way, so that the people who have the highest chance of getting very sick from this flu are getting vaccinated first," she said. "Only some regions in New Hampshire are moving forward with child clinics at this time, and Greater Sullivan County is one of them."

Two clinics, one in Sunapee and one in Claremont, are scheduled for next week. From 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9, there will be an appointment-only clinic at the Sunapee Safety Services

See **CLINICS** - Page A2

CLINICS FROM PAGE A1

building on Route 11. The following day, Thursday, Dec. 10, an appointment-open clinic will be open from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Claremont Middle School on South Street. The flu vaccines disbursed at these clinics are free.

Public health officials require people who need flu shots to call ahead of time to register and make an appointment for one of the clinics. This helps assess eligibility and avoid lines at the clinic, McAuliff said. Regional public health officials this week set up a local hotline for clinic registration and appointments. That number is 603-504-1000. For general information on H1N1 flu, call the state hotline

at 2-1-1.

Some people should not receive influenza vaccinations, according to the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. Those groups include people with a severe allergy to chicken eggs, people who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past and children younger than 6 months. People with a moderate-to-severe illness with a fever should wait to get vaccinated until the symptoms lessen, according to DHHS.

The federal Center for Disease Control and Prevention recently issued a warning about spam emails

that purport to be about a CDC-sponsored state vaccination program, according to DHHS. The email messages state that anyone 18 and older is required to create a personal H1N1 Vaccination Profile on the CDC Web site. No such program exists and users who click on the email are at risk of having malicious code installed on their computer.

So far, seven people in New Hampshire have died as a result of complications after contracting swine flu. Several had underlying medical conditions.

The majority of people who have died from the virus have been under the age of 65 according to DHHS.