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STATE OF OHIO TO RECEIVE \$9.8 MILLION IN FEDERAL PANDEMIC FLU FUNDING

Money will assist state and local health departments continue preparedness efforts for H1N1

COLUMBUS – The State of Ohio will receive \$9.8 million in one-time pandemic preparedness funds for states and communities to use in their continued planning and preparations in the event a more severe form of H1N1 flu develops in the coming months. Ohio’s share is part of a \$260 million national program.

“The wave of flu illness we saw starting in April should be a wake-up call to all Ohioans – that preparedness is important for each individual, family and community,” Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Alvin D. Jackson M.D. said. “Government cannot do this alone. A flu pandemic affects every one of us, and every one of us should prepare.”

Today’s announcement will enable ODH and the state’s 130 local health departments continue to reach deeper into communities and help more Ohioans with their planning efforts.

Funds for pandemic planning have been provided to states before; between 2005 and 2008, Ohio received about \$17.4 million, of which about \$11.8 million, or more than two-thirds was provided to the state’s local health departments.

In the coming weeks, ODH and local health departments will determine the projects and activities to be conducted with the funds. Because an H1N1 vaccine is expected to be provided free to states from the federal government this autumn, the grant will not be used to buy supplies of vaccine or antiviral medications.

Jackson provided Ohioans good advice: “As Ohio’s doctor, I want all my patients to fill this prescription for staying healthy. Wash your hands, cover your coughs and sneezes and if you do become sick, avoid others.”

ODH provides information about pandemic flu at its Web site <http://www.odh.ohio.gov> or by phone at 1-866-800-1404 during business hours.

Contact: Ohio Department of Health, Office of Public Affairs 614-644-8562.