



NEWS RELEASE

St. Charles County Government

Department of Community Health and the Environment

Gil Copley, Director

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Hope Woodson, Director – Division of Public Health

636-949-7407

Doug Bolnick, Public Information Officer

636-949-7408

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 16, 2011

SCC HEALTH TO OFFER SHINGLES VACCINE JUNE 1

One-Time Vaccination Reduces Risk for Disease Developing in Older Adults

St. Charles County, Missouri – According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one in three Americans will develop shingles (which is also known as zoster or herpes zoster). To help reduce the risk that this painful disease will develop in our community, on June 1, 2011, the St. Charles County Division of Public Health’s Immunization Clinic will begin offering the vaccine Zostavax® through its office at 1650 Boone’s Lick Road in St. Charles.

The Immunization Clinic will offer Zostavax® for approved patients, regardless of residency. Currently the vaccine is not covered by Medicare or most insurance providers. As a result, the cost to receive the vaccine and consultation with St. Charles County clinic nurses is \$170. Vaccines will be administered only by appointment, which may be scheduled by calling (636) 949-1857.

“As shingles impacts the lives of nearly one-third of Americans, we are happy to now have the ability to offer this vaccine to St. Charles County residents and others,” Division of Public Health Director Hope Woodson said. “Since this disease causes a painful rash that can last for weeks, months, and in some cases years, it is important for those who are eligible — this vaccine is FDA-approved for those 60 and older — to do everything they can to reduce the risk for contracting this disease.”

Caused by the varicella zoster virus, the same virus that causes chickenpox, shingles was diagnosed in nearly one million Americans last year — with more than half of the cases found in those 60 years and older. Although not contagious, the disease often occurs in people who have medical conditions that keep their immune systems from working properly or those in high-stress positions. Symptoms include a painful, itchy rash that typically develops on one side of the body, fever, headache, chills, and an upset stomach. In rare cases, shingles can lead to other complications such as pain lasting long after the rash clears, blindness, hearing problems, and even pneumonia, brain inflammation, or death.

In a recent study, Zostavax® reduced the development of shingles in more than half of the test subjects. Patients should not take Zostavax® if they are allergic to gelatin or neomycin, have weakened immune systems, take high doses of steroids, or if they are or may become pregnant. In addition, since it contains a weakened chickenpox virus, those who are near or care for infants or someone who may be pregnant should discuss the use of this vaccine with their health care provider.

The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment is committed to the protection and enhancement of health and the quality of life for all members of our community. For more information on the Department’s efforts, please visit www.scchealth.org or call 636-949-7400.

###