



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## Flu season is here – find clinics near you

ANDREW J LANZA January 15, 2013

By virtually all accounts, we are currently in the midst of a particularly bad flu season. With this in mind, I wanted to provide you with some helpful information about the flu, including how and where you and your family can get vaccinated.

According to the State Health Department, it's not too late to get vaccinated for this year's flu season, and most people 6 months and older are recommended to receive an influenza vaccination each year. The vaccine is especially important for people who run a high risk of developing serious complications. That includes pregnant women, children under 5 years old, adults aged 65 or older, and people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions.

I encourage you to visit [FLU.GOV](http://FLU.GOV) for helpful facts on how to avoid getting the flu. This official government website also includes an easy-to-use Flu Vaccine Finder to help you find the most convenient place to get vaccinated. Simply enter your local zip code, and you will find a range of local options that are available. (Once you've identified a location, it makes sense to call ahead to verify the availability of the vaccine, as well as local hours of operation.)

Influenza, commonly referred to as the 'flu', is a severe respiratory illness that is easily spread and can lead to severe complications, even death. Each year in the U.S. on average, influenza and its related complications result in approximately 226,000 hospitalizations and

over 23,600 deaths. Combined with pneumonia, influenza is the nation's eighth leading cause of death.

Simply put, the flu can pose far greater health risks than those presented by a "common cold." So it's just good, old-fashioned common sense for you and your family to take all appropriate steps to avoid the flu and its potentially serious consequences.