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## NORTH TONAWANDA H1N1, RABIES CLINIC SET FOR SATURDAY SMOLINSKI SAYS PART OF EFFORT TO BRING COUNTY SERVICES TO CITY

NORTH TONAWANDA—The Niagara County Health Department will provide a joint H1N1 and rabies vaccination clinic in North Tonawanda Saturday—a move that the city's senior county lawmakers says is aimed at returning more county services to the Lumber City.

Vaccinations will be given for seasonal flu, H1N1, and rabies from 2 to 4 p.m., while the seasonal flu and H1N1 shots will continue until 5:30 p.m., Legislator Pete Smolinski, R-North Tonawanda, explained. The clinics will be held at the North Tonawanda Public Works garage, located at 758 Erie Ave.

Smolinski said that the County Legislature's Community Services Committee had decided to pair the flu clinic with a previously-planned rabies clinic to better serve constituents and provide for a "one-stop shopping" experience while aggressively fighting back against the flu pandemic.

"Quite frankly, we've been working with the Health Department to get more services brought back to North Tonawanda, and this is one of those services," Smolinski said. "We'll have flu shots right in the city where you don't have to travel anywhere else to get them."

Since he became a county legislator, Smolinski has made increasing county services to North Tonawanda one of his top legislative priorities. With the onset of the H1N1 influenza virus this year, Smolinski began working with Legislators Paul Wojtaszek, R-North Tonawanda, and Barbara Zellner, D-North Tonawanda, to see that county resources were deployed to inoculate vulnerable populations.

"The three legislators from North Tonawanda have been working on this project for a few months now, and now the doses have come in so we've been able to start mass inoculations," Smolinski said. "This is a real important thing for all NT residents, especially with this epidemic that we have with the H1N1 virus."

Smolinski reserved words of praise for the Community Services Committee's chairman, Legislator Danny Sklarski, D-Niagara, and Health Department staff, who he praised for working closely with North Tonawanda lawmakers.

"Dan Sklarski is chairman of the committee, and he's been overseeing this whole venture with us to bring more services to North Tonawanda," Smolinski said. "Chairman Sklarski has been very good at working with all the legislators to bring these services to locations throughout the county, and in this case, it was North Tonawanda's turn. And he was really helpful."

Smolinski said that the county was committed to protecting its population from H1N1 and seasonal flu—as well as rabies, which has in recent years been a concern for pet-owners and parents with sightings of coyotes in North Tonawanda.

The H1N1 vaccine will be available for Niagara County residents who meet the following criteria: Individuals aged six months to 24 years, pregnant women, household contacts and caregivers of children younger than six months, and individuals age 25 through 64 with health conditions associated with a higher risk of medical complications from influenza.

"H1N1 has proven to be a very dangerous epidemic, and anything we can do to help our citizens is very important," Smolinski said.

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