

Tuesday, January 12, 2010

Graham Health Center joins CDC and MDCH in urging flu vaccine

Marking the observance of National Influenza Vaccination Week, Jan. 10-16, Graham Health Center is echoing a call from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the Michigan Department of Community Health for continued flu vaccinations.

Public health officials note that ongoing vaccination will help communities prevent the spread of the flu virus and could lessen the impact or even prevent a third wave of influenza illnesses.

National statistics in recent months indicate a decrease in reported influenza cases, but Graham Health Center Director Nancy Jansen notes that more recent state figures point to a 3 percent increase in reported cases.

"We know that the spread of influenza is highly unpredictable, so we don't know if this small increase in the past week will be the beginning of a third wave of widespread infection," she explained. "In any case, spread of the virus at some level will continue for several months so it is never too late to vaccinate."

As such, members of the Oakland University campus community who have not received seasonal or H1N1 vaccines are strongly encouraged to do so. Graham Health Center has free vaccine for all students, and no appointment is necessary to obtain one. The cost is \$10 for staff and faculty.

As of Jan. 5, approximately 111 million doses of the H1N1 vaccine had been distributed nationally, which means that supplies are now ample. While the vaccine was initially prioritized for high-risk target groups, Graham is currently making the vaccine available to anyone who wishes to receive it.

Vaccination continues to be particularly important for people identified in the initial target groups, including pregnant women; household contacts and caregivers of infants younger than six months of age; health care and emergency medical services personnel; all individuals six months through 24 years of age; and individuals 25 through 64 years of age who have medical conditions with higher risk of complications from influenza.

Meanwhile, an estimated 114 million doses of seasonal influenza vaccine have been distributed nationally to respond to very high demand this season.

Those wishing to learn more about the status of the pandemic are encouraged to monitor advisories issued by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** and the **World Health Organization**. For more additional information on the status of the H1N1 flu pandemic and infection prevention methods, visit **OU's Infection Prevention & Control Web site**, the **Oakland County Health Division Web site** and **www.flu.gov**.

SUMMARY

Graham Health Center is offering a free seasonal flu vaccine for all students, and no appointment is necessary to obtain one. The cost is \$10 for staff and faculty.

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