

Flu vaccine set to arrive any day

Written by Chris Lee

Where is the flu vaccine? A question some may have asked lately. Well, the answer is simple. It's coming. Yes, but when? That answer is also simple. Soon.

A nationwide shortage of the seasonal flu vaccine has been seen and officials expect the vaccine to arrive in varied amounts for the next few weeks.

John Ayoub, Melissa Memorial Hospital (MMH) administrator said they were supposed to receive roughly 900 doses of the seasonal flu vaccine on Friday, Oct. 2 but only a fraction of that amount was received.

Holyoke isn't the only town experiencing a shortage of the vaccine. Ayoub said there are shortages throughout the U.S.

Ayoub said 450 clinics in Denver alone were canceled last week. "This was not an isolated incident, we're not the only ones," he added. "Its not like Holyoke is being discriminated against. This is wide spread."

There are only about five organizations that make flu vaccine and they are located throughout the world. Everybody buys from the same place. In addition to the seasonal flu vaccine being produced, the companies were asked to come up with the H1N1 vaccine as well and Ayoub feels that is where the congestion is coming from.

Most all vaccines are produced year round and are administered year round. The seasonal flu vaccine is only produced for the flu season. Ayoub said the amount people buy every year varies. If a clinic or hospital doesn't use all of the vaccine they purchase, it is returned. The problem is, once returned the vaccine can't be used the following year because it changes due to specific mutations.

"It's coming, it's not that it isn't out there," Ayoub said. "It is being produced."

Ayoub said once they receive the vaccine they will advertise flu clinic times and locations.

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