

H1N1 vaccine now available to everyone

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

The Northeast Colorado Health Department has opened up the H1N1 vaccine to all northeast Colorado residents.

“We have received enough of the H1N1 vaccine that we are now opening it up to anyone that would like to receive one,” said John Crosthwait, NCHD’s district public health administrator. “There are still certain groups of people that are at a higher risk than others for developing severe illness from this virus and we encourage those individuals to seek out a vaccine now. However, considering the number of doses we have received and will continue to receive, as well as how much interest we have had from populations outside those groups, we are pleased that we can finally offer this to anyone that is concerned about getting the H1N1 virus.”

Those groups of individuals that are at a higher risk for developing complications from the H1N1 flu or are recommended to receive a vaccination because of their occupation include:

—Pregnant women.

—People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months.

—Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel.

—All people from 6 months through 24 years of age.

—Adults and seniors with chronic health conditions.

NCHD will be holding two large H1N1 walk-in clinics this Saturday, Dec. 12 in Yuma County. These public clinics will be held in Yuma at the Quintech Building and in Wray at the Wray Rehabilitation and Activities Center. They will all run from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. or until vaccine runs out.

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H1N1 vaccinations from NCHD are free of charge.

In order to speed up the process of a large walk-in clinic, residents are urged to visit the health department's web site, www.nchd.org, and print out the appropriate H1N1 consent forms listed on the front page. There are two forms listed in both English and Spanish, one for adults age 18 and over and one for children. A separate consent form must be filled out for each person receiving a vaccination. Those that print and fill out the forms prior to showing up at the clinic will move through the check-in process faster.

“Although there has been a decrease in influenza over the past few weeks, we are still seeing more illness and hospitalizations related to H1N1 than what we normally see with seasonal flu,” said Crosthwait. “It takes 10 days to two weeks after you receive a vaccination to achieve protection from the virus, so now is a great time to receive it, rather than waiting until illness is spreading rapidly in our communities.”

For those individuals that cannot attend the large walk-in clinics on Saturday and would like to make an appointment to receive their H1N1 vaccination at one of NCHD's regularly scheduled immunization clinics, contact one of the following offices: Logan, Phillips and Sedgwick counties call 522-3741; Morgan and Washington counties call (970) 867-4918; Yuma County call (970) 848-3811.

For more information about H1N1 clinics and other recent updates visit www.nchd.org.