

The Community Hero



Volunteers needed for H1N1 efforts region-wide

As the first shipments of H1N1 vaccine are slowly hitting our community, health departments around the region are calling for volunteers to help.

At this point, volunteers will be needed to help answer phones (in a public information call center), coordinate new volunteers, and assist with training new volunteers.

“As we move through this process, volunteers are and will be a vital part of protecting the health of our communities,” said Re-

gional Volunteer Coordinator Rebecca Ray. “Health departments do not have enough resources to respond on their own. Volunteers are and will continue to be a critical part of managing this flu season.”

Springfield-Greene County opened a call center the first week of October after the first shipment of H1N1 flu mist arrived. Ray said that she anticipates having to re-open the call center as more vaccine becomes available.

All volunteers with the local public health department and the Community Heroes program are required to attend a two-hour training. Additional training is required for those who participate in the call center.

Any individual wishing to volunteer (either now or in the future) should contact the Regional Community Heroes office at volunteer-health@springfieldmo.gov or by calling (417) 874-1297. Volunteers will be asked to participate in their local jurisdiction.

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H1N1 informational update

The second shipment of H1N1 vaccine arrived in Greene County Oct. 13, and included 3 thousand doses of three different formulations of vaccine including nasal spray, inactivated single-dose pre-filled syringes (Thimerosal free), and inactivated multi-dose vials. This vaccine is available for the people at greatest risk of being exposed and/or having complications

from the virus, as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These groups include health care workers at high risk of unexpected exposure to H1N1, children 36 months of age through 18, adults age 19-24, pregnant women, household contacts and caregivers of infants six months of age or younger, and adults 25 – 64 with chronic medi-

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H1N1 vaccine available; situation update

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cal conditions.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department is encouraging people in these high risk categories to contact their health care provider for vaccine availability. Every provider does not yet have vaccine, however, more vaccine will arrive weekly. It is important to remember that everyone will be given a chance to be vaccinated eventually, but it may take some time.

Information on vaccine availability will be publicized on the health department's web page at www.springfieldmo.gov/health and will be available on public health information line at (417) 864-1166.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department and the health departments in the surrounding area realize that this is a major undertaking and there will be bumps along the way. However, each local public health agency will work with community partners to make it as seamless as possible.

Out of the first shipment of 1,400 doses of H1N1 mist formulation sent to the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, 855 doses were given. It is the goal of the health department to ensure that 100 percent of

H1N1 vaccine is given out each week.

Ninety-four cases of flu were reported in Springfield-Greene County last week, giving Greene County a total of 229 flu cases since the end of August. This is unusual for this time of year.

The H1N1 mist version of the vaccine is only approved for healthy individuals between the ages of 2 and 49 years old. Those in the first priority group who are not eligible for the mist include pregnant women, children age 6 months to 23 months, and people age 25 – 64 with chronic medical conditions. A person can receive both seasonal flu mist and H1N1 mist, but they should be given no less than 28 days apart.

Receiving either the mist or a vaccination is purely voluntary. The local health departments are committed to providing accurate information on the risks and benefits of vaccine so that individuals can make an informed decision about whether or not to get vaccinated. It is important to realize that the H1N1 vaccine was produced exactly like the seasonal flu vaccine, which has an excellent safety record. No corners were cut in the production or testing of H1N1 vaccine. In fact, additional steps were

taken through clinical trials to ensure safety.

The CDC and FDA closely monitor the safety of seasonal influenza and other vaccines licensed for use in the United States in cooperation with state and local health departments, healthcare providers, and other partners.

People are encouraged to get vaccinated for seasonal flu as soon as the vaccine is available from their health care provider. Proven disease prevention methods will also help protect against all kinds of flu viruses, including washing your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth to keep from spreading germs, and try to avoid close contact with sick people.

Protect the community from flu-like illness by staying home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, without the use of a fever-reducing medicine. Keep away from others as much as possible, and cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Remember to throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

For more information about H1N1 and how to protect yourself, visit www.fighttheflumo.com.

Volunteer Profile

Janice Floyd



Q: What is your current job? I am a Home Health Aide

Q: Where do you live? I live on a family farm near Stockton, in Cedar County.

Q: What is your family like? Dean, my husband, and I have a son, Randy, and a daughter, Becky. We have five grandchildren, four step-grandchildren and

seven great-grandchildren. My mom, who is 86, and Dean's mom, who is 88, are very much a part of our family.

Q: Why did you decide to become a Community Hero?

My daughter encouraged me to!

Q: Why do you think it's important to be prepared?

Cedar County has weird weather and after 9-11, I feel we all need preparation to exist.

Q: What are your hobbies?

I enjoy quilting, cooking, flowers, reading and our cattle.

Q: Why do you think it's important to volunteer?

Volunteering should be from the heart, not guided by duty. God guides me.

Q: What is your favorite food?

Anything, especially Mexican.

Q: What is your favorite color?

Blue.

Q: What is your life philosophy?

If you need me, I'll be there!

Featured Partner

Public Information Call Center

The Greene County Office of Emergency Management and other emergency response agencies in the Springfield-Greene county area have come together to support a community-wide call center that could be activated in several different types of emergency situations.

This call center would require volunteers to help answer phones and record the types of questions that were being asked of the public. The public information call center will be operated out of the Greene County Office of Emergency Manage-

ment and will be staffed with volunteers who are already affiliated with a volunteer agency.

After the ice storm of January 2007, emergency response personnel realized a community need for information. The public information call center has been in the planning process ever since.

All volunteers who participate in the call center will be required to attend training in order to learn about proper phone etiquette, current situation updates, and how to record all calls taken.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the need for a call center, volunteers will be given short notice of the need of their services in the call center. However, because of the need it confirms the importance of the call center and the importance of having willing volunteers to support it.

If you would like to support the call center, contact volunteerhealth@springfieldmo.gov or call (417) 874-1297. Training will be held Friday, Oct. 23 at 9:30 a.m. and again on Thursday, Oct. 29 at 6:30 p.m.

Calendar of Events

Volunteers are needed to assist with the H1N1 response efforts. Please attend a Community Hero training to get involved and make a difference in your community!

Oct. 19. Greene County. Community Heroes Training. 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Springfield-Greene County Health Department. This training session is for all individuals who would like to be a volunteer for the local public health agency. Medical and non-medical volunteers are currently needed to assist with the H1N1 response. Training will be held in the classroom. E-mail volunteer-health@springfieldmo.gov or call (417) 874-1297 to register.

Oct. 23. Greene County. Public Information Call Center Training 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Springfield-Greene County Health Department. This training session is for all individuals who would like to be a volunteer for the public information call center. Volunteers are currently needed to answer questions (with health department guidance) regarding the H1N1 vaccination program. Training will be held in the classroom. E-mail

volunteer-health@springfieldmo.gov or call (417) 874-1297 to register.

Oct. 24. Greene County. Community Heroes Training. 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Springfield-Greene County Health Department. This training session is for all individuals who would like to be a volunteer for the local public health agency. Medical and non-medical volunteers are currently needed to assist with the H1N1 response. Training will be held in the classroom. E-mail volunteer-health@springfieldmo.gov or call (417) 874-1297 to register.

Oct. 29. Greene County. Public Information Call Center Training 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Office of Emergency Management. This training session is for all individuals who would like to be a volunteer for the public information call center. Volunteers are currently needed to answer questions (with health department guidance) regarding the H1N1 vaccination program. E-mail volunteerhealth@springfieldmo.gov or call (417) 874-1297 to register.

Mission Statement

We will provide volunteer help to the communities we serve whenever it is most needed. We will always plan, prepare and participate.

Community Heroes is a Region D Local Public Health Volunteer program. Community Heroes does not discriminate against any individual because of race, color, religion, sex, age, physical or mental handicap, sensory disabilities or veteran status.

For questions, comments, or suggestions contact Regional Educator/Volunteer Coordinator, Rebecca Ray at (417) 874-1297 or by e-mail at r-ray@springfieldmo.gov

Visit us or sign up to be a Community Hero at www.beacommunityhero.com

The Community Hero is a monthly publication for the volunteers and staff members of Region D local public health departments.

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If you would like to have your training or event listed in *The Community Hero*, please contact Rebecca Ray at (417) 874-1297.