

PUBLIC HEALTH

PREPAREDNESS UPDATE

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Zachary Thompson, Director

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Mireya Medrano with DCHHS preventative health receives the flu vaccine administered by DCHHS Asst. Director Public Health Communicable Disease Tammara Scroggins, RN.



Top: Immunization Program Supervisor Barbara Davis, RN, with toddler Case Pulliam who visits DCHHS for immunization.

Bottom: PIO Renae Crutchfield receives the flu vaccine administered by Immunizations Nurse Elizabeth Burleson.



DCHHS prepares for upcoming flu season



The timing of flu activity can be unpredictable; however, DCHHS begins to monitor flu activity as early as October of each year.

This year, Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) begins offering the seasonal flu vaccine for children and adults as early as Oct. 3. The flu vaccine is free for all uninsured and low income Dallas County residents.

"We would like to see an increase in early vaccination rates," said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS director. "Getting the annual flu shot is really important, especially as you get older and your immune system doesn't work as well."

Most people who get influenza will recover in several days to less than two weeks, but some people will develop complications as a result of the flu.

Persons in high risk groups such as pregnant women are more prone to severe illness due to changes in the immune system, heart, and lungs during pregnancy.

In addition, young children, older adults and people with chronic health conditions are advised to get the flu shot in the beginning of

flu season (October) to help stay healthy.

Due to weaker immune systems, older adults, children and people with chronic health conditions are at the greatest burden of severe flu disease.

Last flu season, DCHHS reported 16 flu-related deaths in Dallas County. These deaths were from flu complications of older adults between the ages of 56 and 97-years-old.

"High risk individuals and people in close contact with immune suppressed persons should receive the vaccine early to help prevent their own illness and prevent the spread of flu to others," said Dr. Christopher Perkins, Dallas County health authority/medical director.

"For those who are not consid-

ered high risk, a routine yearly influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons ages 6 months and older."

The adult vaccine is given in the adult immunization clinic at the DCHHS building located at 2377 N. Stemmons Frwy. in Dallas. The children's vaccine is available at all DCHHS immunization clinics. For more information call 214-819-2162.



Top doc Dr. Perkins discusses Hepatitis A amongst homeless

As DCHHS continues homeless initiatives, public health officials are on the lookout for emerging infectious disease amongst the community including Dallas homeless populations.

Recently, Dallas County Medical Director / Health Authority Dr. Christopher Perkins interviewed with FOX4 to discuss public health amongst the homeless and Hepatitis A concerns across the

country.

"Dallas County has not identified Hepatitis A concerns amongst the homeless; however, we do understand that other counties are faced with the problem," said Dr. Christopher Perkins, Dallas County health authority/medical director.

Hepatitis A is a highly contagious liver infection caused by the Hepatitis A virus.

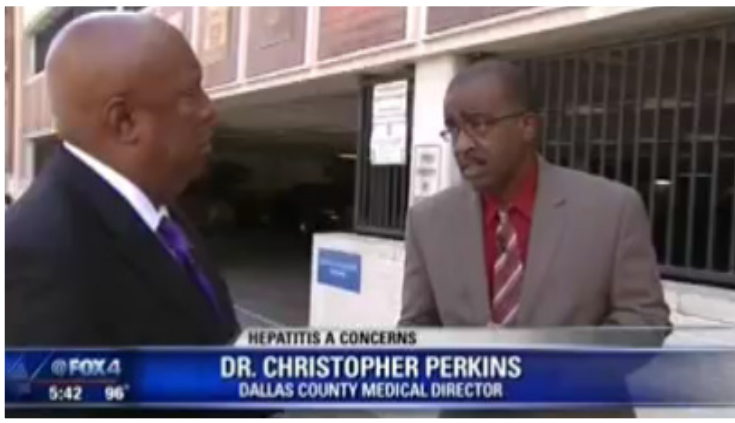
It can range in severity from a

mild illness lasting a few weeks to a severe illness lasting several months (CDC).

"Hepatitis A is usually spread when a person ingests fecal matter from contact with objects, food, or drinks contaminated by feces or stool from an infected person. Since the transmission can be caused by an infected person not washing his/her hands properly, DCHHS understands the chal-

lenge that the homeless have."

DCHHS is actively reviewing current strategies and recommendations set in place to address the potential public health concern. Through disease prevention and intervention, DCHHS continues the mission to help protect the health of citizens of Dallas County.



"Chief on the beat" health and safety fair

Supporting the City of Dallas Police Department (DPD), Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia and DCHHS Public Health Educator Marisa Gonzales participated in the Unidos "Chief on the Beat" health and safety fair held at La Academia de Estrellas Sept. 23.

The monthly initiative lead by DPD is to build personal relationships and trust within the Hispanic community by being more visible to residents.

During the event, free health screen-

ings took place in addition to DCHHS discussing emergency preparedness with families and staff members.

Featuring an exciting car show, DPD lower rider showcase and free live entertainment, the event through the Dallas Office of Community Affairs is one that all students and parents should experience. For more information on future events, contact 214 671 4045 or on twitter @DPDCA.



DCHHS takes public health to the polls



DCHHS joins Dallas County elections kicking off early voting within the month of October. On County Election Voter Registration Day, DCHHS supported the organization's efforts by taking public health to the polls.

DCHHS leadership passed out public health preparedness materials to residents and answered questions regarding emergency preparedness initiatives.

The Constitutional Amendment and Joint Election in Dallas County is set to take place on Tuesday, Nov. 4; however, early voting begins as early as Oct. 23. For more information on Dallas County elections, or to view a sample ballot, visit www.dallascountyvotes.org

HIV/STD division community partnerships



DCHHS maintains community partnerships with various organizations. These organizations and businesses help DCHHS with platforms outside of the healthcare setting to of-

fer services to individuals at highest risk of becoming HIV infected in their community.

Community picnics are an effective opportunity to increase community support of public health initiatives with HIV/STD testing.

Annually Barnabas Baptist Church holds its community picnic, allowing DCHHS to utilize the venue. This year, DCHHS participated in the picnic by offering free STD testing services to participants.

District 111 Resource Day

DCHHS Director Zachary Thompson, Larry McDonald, Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) and Bryan Jones, Weatherization, provided guidance and informational materials for their corresponding programs in addition to discussing public health preparedness with participants at State Rep. Yvonne Davis', District 111 Resource Day.



Tackling economic burdens of health inequalities

October marks Health Literacy Month, a time for organizations and individuals to promote the importance of understandable health information.

Each month, DCHHS actively participates in healthcare associated workshops to provide a comprehensive understanding of the key dynamics in public health within the community.

Kicking off an early October campaign, DCHHS joins Texas House of Representative Toni Rose, Parkland Medical Director of Behavioral and Psychiatric Services for Jail Health Dr. Waseem Ahmed and UT Austin Associate Tenured Professor Dr. Michele Rountree to discuss health disparities and their economic impact at the Fall Policy Summit held by the African American leadership institute.

Health disparities are complex involving multiple factors including individual, genetic and environmental risk factors. They are often driven by the social conditions in which individuals

live, learn, work and play, which are an important role in people's ability to make healthy choices.

"Health disparities between various racial and ethnic groups and health equity are difficult to tackle," said Zachary Thompson, DCHHS director.

"DCHHS constantly reviews strategies to help reduce disparities throughout Dallas County; this continues to be a major goal in improving the overall health of our residents."

The Fall Policy Summit is an inaugural summit targeting an array of topics facing the black community as a whole.

The summit creates awareness and gives direction to individuals as to what they can do to better help communities.

Tackling economic burdens of health inequalities is a collaborative effort between us all. For more information on how to help, visit dallascounty.org/hhs.



Left to right: State Rep Nicole Collier, Dr. Michele A. Rountree, MSW Ph.D Associate, Tenured Professor, UT Austin, School of Social Work, Dr. Waseem Ahmed, MD Med. Dir. of Behavioral and Psychiatric Services for Jail Health at Parkland, Zachary Thompson Director, DCHHS.

October is national what month?

- * Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- * Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- * Down Syndrome Awareness Month
- * Health Literacy Month
- * Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Awareness Month
- * Latino AIDS Awareness Day Oct. 15
- * National Mammography Day Oct. 21

view more at www.cdc.gov/women/observances

Employees reach milestones

5 Years

10 Years

15 Years

25 Years

30 Years



Program Monitor Denise Cherry Retires



DCHHS
Safe families, healthy lives.

Dallas County Health and Human Services



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About This Newsletter

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