

# PUBLIC HEALTH

## PREPAREDNESS UPDATE


**September 2018**

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 Ganesh Shivaramaiyer, Interim Director

<http://www.dallascounty.org/hhs>
**PAGE 2**
**Back-to-school Vaccination  
Mobilization**  
  
**Dallas Foundation  
Provides Funding**
**PAGE 3**
**DCHHS on WFAA**  
  
**Commissioner Daniel's  
Town Hall Meeting**
**PAGE 4**
**Welcome AD Sonya  
Huges**  
  
**DCHHS to Host Influenza  
Webinar**

## DCHHS Promotes National Preparedness Month

DCHHS will collaborate with the City of Dallas and the Department of State Health Services Region 2/3 in an Emergency Preparedness and Health Fair event. This event will be conducted at the West Dallas Multipurpose Center and will have free flu shots, food, fun, prizes and music along with preparedness information, vendors and community agencies.

September is National Preparedness Month (NPM), which provides an opportunity to remind us to prepare ourselves and our families now and throughout the year. This NPM will fo-

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH 2018

# Disasters Happen

**PREPARE NOW** **LEARN HOW**


FEMA

Ready.

cus on planning, with an overarching theme: Disasters Happen. Prepare Now. Learn How.

Taking time to learn lifesaving skills – such as CPR and first aid, checking insurance policies and coverage for the hazards one may face, such as flood, earthquakes, and tornados.

The devastating hurricanes and wildfires of 2017 is a reminder of the importance of preparing for disasters. The goal of preparedness is to eliminate, reduce and/or mitigate the impact of disasters.

## DCHHS Now Offers Flu Vaccine for Adults

Influenza season is quickly approaching and Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) is now offering the seasonal flu vaccine for adults. Residents can get the flu shot at any one of the seven DCHHS clinic locations throughout Dallas County. Locations may be found at the following link; <http://www.dallascounty.org/department/hhs/immunizationhours.html>.

The cost for the flu vaccine is \$20. Flu vaccine is covered by Medicare and Medicaid at no charge. DCHHS anticipates offering the Texas Vaccines for Children Flu vaccines mid-September.

“We urge everyone to get their flu shot now while it is early in the season,” said Ganesh Shivaramaiyer, DCHHS director. “The sooner you get the flu shot and practice good hygiene the severity of the flu season, most certainly, could be averted”.

DCHHS is following guidelines from the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC) to begin offering the flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available in the community. CDC recommends the flu vaccine as the best means of flu prevention for almost everyone except children younger than 6 months of age. The flu vaccine DCHHS provides is an all-in-one shot that protects against multiple flu strains including the H1N1 virus.

“It takes about two weeks for the body to develop the antibodies needed to provide protection against the flu virus,” Dr. Perkins said. “That’s why we are encouraging everyone to get the flu vaccine as soon as possible, so they’re protected early in the flu season.”

In addition to getting the flu shot, DCHHS encourages everyone to practice cough and sneeze etiquette along with proper hand-washing. DCHHS has flu prevention materials on its website available for the public to download.



## DCHHS Successfully Mobilized BTS Vaccination Clinics

From July through August DCHHS initiated Mobile Back-to-School vaccination clinics. With this initiative, DCHHS worked with community partners in order to get the word out to the public. "You can give a kid a haircut and brand new school supplies but if he/she gets sent home on the first day of school because their shots are not up to date; you have set that child up to fail," said Dallas Police Department Officer Bervin Smith. "It sends the wrong message to the child," he continued to say. Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer expressed his sincere gratitude for this collaborative effort with the DPD especially with these events that provided free school supplies to the children that received vaccines. "The initiative helped us mobilize to various areas in Dallas County to allow families to overcome barriers that would prevent them from getting their children

vaccinated," said Interim Director Shivaramaiyer. DCHHS has seen an impressive increase this year in the number of children that received their vaccinations compared to the previous year.



### DCHHS to Kick-off Flu Vaccine Mobilization Early

Getting a flu vaccine each year remains the single best and most important line of defense from the seasonal influenza virus. That is why DCHHS is getting a head start on administering the flu vaccine this flu season. DCHHS will kick-off the first mobile flu vaccine clinic this season at the Pleasant Grove Library on Thursday, September 13th from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

## Dallas Foundation Provides Additional Funding for Emergency Air-conditioner Program

Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) has secured funding in the generous amount of \$19,700 from Emergency Heat Relief Fund of The Dallas Foundation on August 28, 2018. The funds will be used for the purpose of purchasing and installing air conditioner

units to those homes that do not have a functional air conditioner unit. Priority will be given to those households with presence of vulnerable individuals such as children aged 5 years and younger, disabled persons, and/or elderly individuals.



From left to right - DCHHS Weatherization Program Monitor Daniel Araiza; DCHHS Interim Assistant Director of Finance, Budget and Contracts Masooma Hyder; The Dallas Foundation Program Officer Brittani Trusty; DCHHS CEAP Program Manager Doris Bass.

### Dallas County Tax Office invites DCHHS to present at Leadership Meeting

Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer and Health Educator Marisa Gonzales presented to the staff at the Dallas County Tax Office Leadership meeting in August. Topics included-Influenza Virus, West Nile and Zika Viruses, Back to School Immunizations and Heat Related Illnesses. The Dallas County Tax Office is committed to working with DCHHS to promote and create awareness to the community by posting educational materials at their multiple office sites throughout Dallas County.



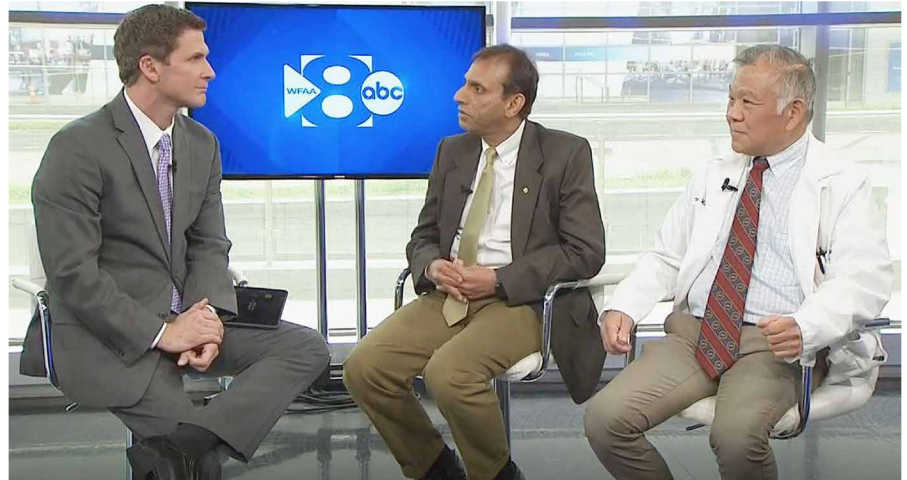
DCHHS Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer speaks to the tax office staff (Left); DCHHS Health Educator Marisa Gonzales (Right)



## Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer and Dr. Gary Woo Discuss TB and BTS Immunizations with WFAA's Jason Wheeler

Dr. Gary Woo discussed two confirmed cases of Tuberculosis at W. T. White High School. These cases were confirmed just before the 2018-19 school year officially commenced. "You just need to be exposed for prolong periods of time to air that the source case has been breathing or coughing." He urged parents that if their children were exposed to this infection to be tested. Symptoms of TB include: coughing-up of blood, fatigue, fever, weight loss, decrease in appetite and sometimes night sweats.

While parents are busy getting their children ready to go back to school this fall, vaccines should be on the list too. Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer encouraged parents to make sure their children's immunization records are up to date before school begins. "There are 16 vaccine preventable diseases. These diseases can be serious and can lead to hospitalization as well as death, especially for infants and



*From left to right - WFAA News Anchor Jason Wheeler; DCHHS Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer; DCHHS TB Medical Director Dr. Gary Woo.*

children." he said. Parents who have children from birth through 18 years old are urged to get their children the required vaccines before school begins. DCHHS has 7 immunization

clinics throughout Dallas County. Locations and hours can be found at the following link; <http://www.dallascounty.org/department/hhs/immunizationhours.html>.

## DCHHS Presents at Commissioner Daniel's Town Hall Meetings

DCHHS was invited to speak about West Nile Virus at Commissioner Theresa Daniel's Town Hall Meetings. The town hall meetings took place at Road & Bridge 1, Northwest Community Center and Eastfield College in Pleasant Grove. With the emphasis on the 4D's of prevention—Interim Director, Ganesh Shivaramaiyer also talked about DCHHS' continuous efforts to trap mosquitos, test mosquito pools and treat in areas where positive traps were identified. DCHHS provided mosquito repellent and dunks to the participants of the town hall meetings. Other topics that were presented at the town hall meetings: Parkland-Victim Intervention Program, Dallas Independent School District, Dallas County Tax Office, Dallas County Mental Health Courts, Dallas County Public Works & Trails.



*From left to right - DCHHS Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer; Dallas County Commissioner Dr. Theresa Daniel; DCHHS Public Health Educator Marisa Gonzales.*

## DCHHS welcomes Assistant Director, Ryan White Grants Compliance Sonya Hughes

Sonya Marie Hughes has over 10 years of public health experience and served as Epidemiology Surveillance Coordinator for the Dallas County Department of Health and Human Services' Acute Communicable Disease Division for the last 6 years. Prior to that, Ms. Hughes was as a senior HIV Epidemiologist at the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District and a Public Health Associate for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As Epidemiology Surveillance Coordinator, Ms. Hughes supervised a team of epidemiologists that conducted infectious disease surveillance and analysis in Dallas County. She was a key member in several high profile investigations such as the first three Ebola cases diagnosed in the United States, epidemic arboviral outbreaks, pandemic influenza outbreaks, hurricane responses and increases in vaccine-preventable diseases. She has co-authored numerous articles, scientific abstracts and presented at several professional



conferences.

Ms. Hughes received her Bachelors of Arts degree from the University of Texas at Austin, Masters of Public Health from A.T Still University and Public Health Certification from the National Board of Public Health Examiners.

She is married with two children, Chloe and Preston. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her family and helping her elderly neighbors.

## DCHHS to Host Influenza Webinar

Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) continues their series of health education webinars. This month the webinar topic will be about the influenza virus. In addition to having subject matter experts to discuss flu transmission, complications and to promote prevention, there will be a small live audience that will consist of faith-based leadership, senior community members as well as other senior advocates. They will be able to ask questions during the live webinar. With the seasonal flu starting early, it is imperative to start educating about and preventing the flu virus.

For more information about DCHHS webinars, visit [www.dallascounty.org/hhs/2018\\_homepage-news.html](http://www.dallascounty.org/hhs/2018_homepage-news.html)



**DCHHS**  
*Safe families, healthy lives.*

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