

# PUBLIC HEALTH

## PREPAREDNESS UPDATE


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Ganesh Shivaramaiyer, Interim Director

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## Dallas County Health and Human Services welcomes Interim Director



Tenured Chief Financial Officer Ganesh Shivaramaiyer, MBA, has been called to step into the role of DCHHS Interim Director and take over the reins of the department following administrative changes.

Director Shivaramaiyer joined Dallas County in 1991 and most recently served as the Asst. Director of Budget and Finance for DCHHS. Director Shivaramaiyer successfully directed the manifold funding of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and has made significant contributions to the planning and re-

sponse efforts of Hurricanes Katrina, Ike, and Harvey.

In addition, Director Shivaramaiyer contributed to the public health responses of H1N1, Ebola, West Nile and Zika virus.

Bringing more than 26 years of experience within Dallas County, Director Shivaramaiyer now oversees and directs over 37 departmental activities and programs offered through DCHHS.

"I am honored to be appointed to fill this important role for Dallas County residents," said Ganesh Shivaramaiyer.

"My goal within this

role includes guiding the department through myriad challenges and enabling residents, stakeholders and employees to continue to have confidence in our day to day tasks. There are many faces of DCHHS who are committed to serving Dallas County residents.

Monitoring health, diagnosing and investigating disease, mobilizing community partnerships, developing policy, enforcing laws, linking care, assuring a competent workforce and evaluation of our services are still the core focus of our organization."

## Influenza hits Dallas County hard

Influenza activity remains high in Dallas County with nearly 3,000 influenza hospitalizations reported and an increase in both Positive A and B test returning for the season.

This season Dallas County has experienced a spike in influenza activity similar

to trends across the United States.

Uniquely, an increase in Dallas County flu deaths has lead DCHHS Director Shivaramaiyer to initiate prompt response within his first month as Interim Director.



DCHHS Interim Director calls a meeting with DCHHS Health Authority, Epidemiology, Immunizations and Public Health Preparedness divisions to discuss special projects.



DCHHS Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins hosts a round of interviews to discuss flu activity.

## Public health advisory committee discusses Dallas County pandemic flu plans

Influenza surveillance reports sparked concern amongst public health officials nationwide for the 2017-2018 flu season.

Currently, the Dallas County medical community and medical examiner's office have reported a

total of 72 flu-related deaths, including one pediatric death for the season.

During a recent Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) meeting, members and representatives from municipalities discussed emergency preparedness

responses, including national strategic stockpile plans which called for PHAC Chair Commissioner John Wiley Price to discuss expanding influenza discussions to a specific group titled as the Dallas County Influenza Task Force (DCITF).



DCHHS Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaier, Public Health Manager Renee Owusu-Ansah, Commissioner John Wiley Price, Epidemiologist Sonya Hughes, Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins, Chief Epidemiologist Dr. Wendy Chung and Epidemiologist Joel Henderson.

## Commissioner John Wiley Price leads new initiative calling for a Dallas County Influenza Task Force

Upon addressing current public health challenges during a quarterly PHAC meeting, PHAC Chair, Commissioner John Wiley Price called for a specific Task Force to address influenza response.

The Dallas County Influenza Task Force (DCITF) has been comprised of individuals to include Dallas County Commissioner John Wiley Price, Commissioner Dr. Theresa Daniel,

DCHHS Administration, Dallas County Hospital District Representatives, community partners, and DCHHS's subcommittee of Communicable Disease, Immunizations, Public Health Preparedness and Epidemiology.

The mission of the task force is to expand the scope of local health department partnerships in response to influenza activity throughout Dallas County.

"On average, The CDC esti-

mates local health department's account for 2.5 percent of flu vaccines to children and 1.0 percent to adults of the local population," said Ganesh Shivaramaier, DCHHS interim director.

"Local health departments cover only a fraction of influenza immunizations. In an effort to address the growing need of flu prevention and response, the task force activities were set to

include 3rd party review of epidemiology surveillance data, review of immunization rates and activities, public awareness-prevention campaigns and Public Health Preparedness' response planning to flu pandemic.

Through continued assessment, policy development and assurance, external partnerships have been tasked to partner with on going county initiatives."



Left to right: DCITF Subcommittee, Prism Health North Texas CEO Dr. John Carlo, Parkland Chief of Infection Prevention Dr. Pranavi Sreeramoju, DCHHS Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaier, Dallas County Administrator Gordon Hikel, Commissioner John Wiley Price, Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins and Commissioner Dr. Theresa Daniel.

**Older adults, People with High risk health Conditions and Babies are more Vulnerable to flu illness. Get your Free Flu Shot from DCHHS today.**



DCHHS Public Health Educator Marisa Gonzales spots Alba from the Head Start of Greater Dallas who has not had her flu shot.



## Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer creates new mobile immunization clinic initiative

DCHHS has been known for its public outreach works and mobile clinic for HIV/STD testing. With influenza activity on the rise this season, Director Shivaramaiyer's first initiative as Interim Director has been to implement a mobile clinic dedicated specifically to flu vaccine administration, a first of its kind for DCHHS.

The objective of this project is to target identified areas with a high rate of influenza-related ICU hospitalizations and measure health needs to disproportionate groups throughout Dallas County.

The project led by Director Shivaramaiyer was set to intervene through disease prevention by offering free flu vaccines and providing public education to residents at greater risk of flu complication.

During this project, DCHHS contacted local organizations and partnering municipalities who work with the target age groups of older adults and those who may have limited access to care. Between Feb. 2 and March 1, DCHHS launched the pilot project hosting over 12 mobile clinic events throughout the cities

of Irving, Dallas, DeSoto, Cockrell Hill and Cedar Hill.

With support ranging from municipalities, strong community partners such as the Mexican Consulate, endorsements from local organizations, social and local media, Director Shivaramaiyer's leadership for DCHHS's public campaign has reached an audience size of over 1.5 million since Feb. 1.



DCHHS leadership meets with Dallas County Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia and the Mexican Consulate General.



Above: DCHHS Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer Below: Mexican Consulate Community Affairs Andres Galvan Sandoval, DCHHS Public Information Officer Renae Crutchfield, DCHHS Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer, Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia, Consulate General Francisco dela Torre and DCHHS Health Authority/Medical Director Dr. Christopher Perkins.



## DCHHS' mobile immunization clinic hits the streets

Dallas County resident and DCHHS Financial Administration Clerk Armando Martinez takes a seat in the mobile clinic at Pleasant Grove Library. During this event, Pleasant Grove also hosted an AARP tax preparation event allowing DCHHS to reach more residents administering nearly 100 free influenza vaccinations.

DCHHS continues to address the needs of the Hispanic community by directly connecting resources to the Mexican Consulate of Dallas along with other diversity orientated organizations. The organization remains a strong community partner within Dallas County. Below, Field Nurse Supervisor Barbara Davis and Jennifer Aguirre, R.N. prepare to take on more patients.

DCHHS participated in the Head Start of Greater Dallas' annual community fair to provide free vaccines and discuss flu prevention to Dallas County residents. At the forefront of community education, DCHHS Public Health Educator Marisa Gonzales discusses flu severity with residents. During this event, Fox 4 conducted an exclusive interview to cover DCHHS' mobile flu clinic.



## Go green, have a vegetable



Dallas County Health and Human Services breaks into subsidizing healthy fruits and vegetables for the community at nominal costs with its community farm stand powered by Baylor Scott and White Health and Baylor Scott and White Health

and Wellness Center.

Led by Public Health Educators Lashonda Worthing, Britni Williams and Janecia Holley, DCHHS now offers on-going farm stand operations twice monthly bringing fresh fruits and vegetables to the community and right

at the fingertips of County employees.

The selection varies weekly from fresh peppers to tomatoes and from lemons to greens. For more information regarding the Community Farm Stand, visit [www.dallascounty.org/hhs](http://www.dallascounty.org/hhs)



## Gearing Up for World TB Day: March 24

DCHHS is gearing up to raise awareness for World TB day set to take place on March 23 and March 24.

DCHHS plans to take a new initiative with TB Awareness by hosting a two day action event to join hands with residents and employees to kick TB.

March 23, DCHHS will be offering free TB skin testing and public health educators will be on site at the main DCHHS clinic at 2377

N Stemmons providing education.

Expanding the scope of DCHHS' initiative, Saturday, March 24, DCHHS has partnered with City Square to aid in bringing free TB testing to Dallas residents who suffer from poverty and economic disadvantages.

For more information on this event and how your organization can get involved, contact [renae.crutchfield@dallascounty.org](mailto:renae.crutchfield@dallascounty.org)



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### About This Newsletter

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