

HEALTH

The Portland Observer

Flu Vaccine Arrives In Portland Area

Immunization Clinics Are Scheduled At Neighborhood Sites

Multnomah County has scheduled special Flu Immunization Clinics at neighborhood sites throughout the county between Oct. 10th and Oct. 28th.

Dr. Gary L. Oxman, Multnomah County Health Officer, recommends that the following individuals be immunized against influenza before the flu season starts which is usually December:

Senior citizens over age 65; county residents of any age with chronic health problems which require medical follow-up such as heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes, breathing problems, and immunosuppressive condi-

tions including HIV/AIDS infection; children receiving long-term aspirin therapy who may be at risk of developing Reye's Syndrome; medical personnel who have contact with high risk patients; individuals who provide care to high risk persons in the home setting; and nursing home staff.

Influenza is a viral infection of the bronchial tubes and lungs that can make a person ill at any age.

Most people are sick with the flu only a few days, but some people--especially the high risk groups--may become seriously ill and even require hospitalization.

Flu shots are therefore now begin recommended also for any person who wishes to avoid coming down with the flu.

"This year's flu vaccine includes protection from A/Texas/36/91, A/Shangdong/9/93, and B/Panama/45/90 which is projected as being the causes of flu occurring this winter in Oregon" explained Peggy Lou Hillman, Multnomah County's Immunization Coordinator.

"We do recommend that people check with their doctor before taking the vaccine, but most people have no side effects from the flu shot, other than some soreness in the arm that received

the injection," she said.

The vaccine will begin to provide protective immunity within two weeks after vaccination.

Although this year's vaccine immunizes for three strains of viruses, the flu shot cannot protect people from all the different strains of viruses which may occur. Flu shots are formulated to cover the major virus strains that are expected to hit during this year's flu season.

Usually the flu season Oregon runs from November to April with the largest number of cases beginning in December and declining in February.

Pneumococcal vaccine will also be offered this year for the first time. Pneumococcal infection causes serious illness including pneumonia and meningitis.

Anyone can get pneumococcal disease, but persons over 65 years of age and persons of any age who have alcoholism, heart or lung disease, kidney failure, diabetes or certain types of cancer have the greatest risk and age who have alcoholism, heart or lung disease, kidney failure, diabetes or certain types of cancer have the greatest risk and are encouraged to get the vaccine.

One dose of the vaccine (between 1997 and 1983) or who

received the current vaccine (1983 to present) 6 or more years ago.

No appointments are needed at any of the following special Flu/Pneumococcal Immunization Clinics conducted by Multnomah County Health Department.

There is no charge for flu or pneumococcal immunizations for persons 65 and older or on Medicare. People on Medicare must bring their cards with them.

Some appointments are available at regular Multnomah County Health Clinics.

There is a charge for the flu and pneumococcal immunization. For more information, call Multnomah County Information, 248-3816.

Mental Health Help Offered

At any given time, 17 million Americans suffer from depression, yet less than one-third of these individuals seek help. Sadly, despite the fact that treatment is available and recovery likely, 15 percent of those individuals commit suicide.

In an effort to broaden public awareness, depression will be the focus of a mental health screening to be offered at free at Providence Medical Center, Mental Health and Chemical Dependency Programs, and across

the country on National Depression Screening Day as part of Mental Illness Awareness Week.

The depression screenings which are not a substitute for a complete examination will include a psychiatrist led depression education session; anonymous completion of a depression check list; a brief, individualized review of the completed check list with a mental health professional; print and video information about depression; and the opportunity to learn about referral options.

According to Dr. Magnus Lakovics, Regional Executive Director of the Mental Health and Chemical Dependency Program for the Providence Health System, benefits of taking part in the screening and educational session include early detection of depression, a better understanding of depression, its signs and symptoms, insight into available treatments and information about

resources in the community.

Depression screenings are available Thursday, Oct. 6, 6:00 p.m., in the hospital's amphitheater, 4805 N.E. Glisan. The information number for depression screening at Providence Medical Center is 230-6009.

West side screenings will be held from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Tualatin Valley Mental Health Center, 14600 N.W. Cornell Road in Portland. The center's number is 645-3581.

Computers To Improve Medical Service

A new computer system being introduced at Kaiser Permanente's Sunset Medical Office in Washington County may make magazines in pharmacy waiting rooms obsolete. Many patients at the medical office now find their prescription filled before they even have a chance to pick up People or Sports Illustrated.

"This system does seem to speed things up," says Aloha resident Karen Huegel, who has Kaiser Permanente coverage through her employer, Intel. "My prescription was filled right away and I didn't have to wait."

"Our Clinical Information System is fast," says Kaiser Permanente pharmacist Kathryn Ring, RPh. She explains that before the computer pilot began this summer, members would be handed a prescription by their doctor, then carry it down to the pharmacy and wait for it to be filled. Now, all 17 primary care doctors at Sunset have a computer workstation at their desk and type in the prescription. With one keystroke the doctor

sends the prescription instantly to the pharmacy.

"At least two-thirds of the time we will have the medication waiting before the patient can even get dressed and walk here from the exam room," says Ring. "We hand them their medicine and tell them if they want to catch up on the magazines they're welcome to stay."

Peggy McClure is helping introduce the Clinical Information System, which she predicts will be used by all Kaiser Permanente physicians by 1996. McClure says the HMO is building on its earlier computerization successes. "The system we are testing gives physicians the further ability to enter each patient's diagnosis, vital signs and visit notes, as well as to send orders for X-rays, lab tests, prescriptions and other services directly to those departments," says McClure. "Physicians can also call up their appointments for the day and review specific information about who they'll be seeing. Advice nurses

will also be able to assist members better over the phone by having vital information about each patient at their fingertips."

Family practitioner Michael Krall, MD, is one of the first physicians to try out the new software. "A real benefit of this system," says Dr. Krall, "is it improves documentation of patient care. As I type in my notes and tests I've ordered, they automatically become part of the patient's electronic medical record."

Unlike a paper chart, once the system is fully implemented the electronic record will be available in seconds at any Kaiser Permanente facility a member visits. It will also enable a Kaiser Permanente doctor to consult a colleague across town about a patient and let both see the medical record at the same time.

Dr. Krall says once the system is fully in place it will help health professionals deliver even better preventative care. Kaiser Permanente's Assistant Regional Medical Director

Homer Chin, MD, who has been active in developing the Clinical Information System, agrees. He says the system has the potential to track immunizations, health maintenance screenings, and referrals, and generate consent forms and patient letters. "Ultimately, the system should capture enough data to help researchers learn how all patients receiving certain treatments have fared. Regulators and employer groups are anxious for this kind of documentation."

McClure says the system runs within the popular Microsoft Windows program and was developed by Epic Systems Corporation of Madison, Wis. At the end of each medical appointment, patients receive a printed visit summary showing their vital signs, what took place during the visit, instructions from the doctor, and any tests they are to take. Patients have been favorably impressed. "It's nice to walk out with a summary that lists my medications and the amount," said Huegel.


Examining Eating Disorders

A four-week Educational Group designed for persons who suffer from (or who suspect they suffer from) eating disorders is being offered to community members.

Sponsored by the Eating Disorders Program of the Pacific University Psychological Service Center, the Group will be held from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on four consecutive Wednesdays beginning Oct. 12. Location will be the Pacific University Psychology Service Center, 511 S.W. 10th Ave., Suite 400.

Eating disorders are a serious national health problem affecting women and children as well as men. Bulimia, Anorexia Nervosa, and Compulsive Overeating create a major health problems and can interfere with relationships while causing feelings of helplessness and worthlessness.

This Educational Group offers hope for recovery in a supportive and caring environment.



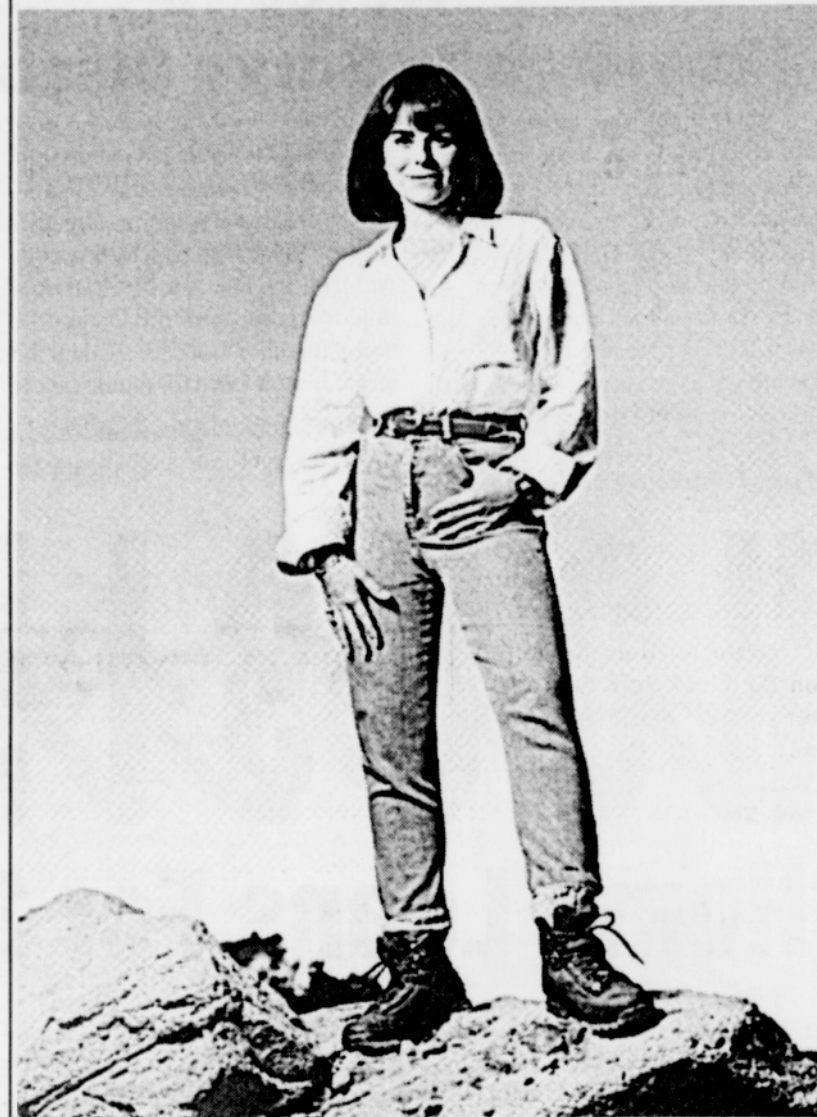
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Tues. 7:00 p.m.
Wed. 9:30 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.
Thurs. 7:00 p.m.
Fri. 9:30 a.m.

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Weight Watchers

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