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Lane County Health officials confirm seven flu-related deaths

On Friday, Lane County Public Health officials confirmed 11 outbreaks of influenza-like-illness have been reported within the last 30 days in Lane County, six of which have been within the last week.

In this same time span in Lane County, seven people have died due to influenza like illness — four in the last week.

"I think it is clear from the number and rate of outbreaks that our vaccination rates here in Lane County are far too low," said Dr. Patrick Luedtke, Lane County Chief Health Officer. "It's certainly not too late to receive your flu vaccination."

"While we will always have reports of individuals contracting influenza after receiving the vaccination, at a population level it is evident that widespread vaccination can and will prevent outbreak scenarios like

what we're seeing now." While it is difficult to accurately compare the current flu season with previous years until after the season has ended, both the number of reported outbreaks and deaths are on track to be at their highest since 2012.

Additionally, this season is unique in that there seems to be a bi-modal distribution in cases, with an initial peak happening in early December and a likely second peak in mid to late January.

Influenza, or the flu, is a contagious respiratory illness that is caused by a virus. It is spread by droplets made when people cough, sneeze or talk.

It is also possible to transmit flu by touching a surface or object that has the flu virus on it, and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes.

The average incubation peri-

od for flu is two days but can range between 1 to 4 days.

Those with flu can infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick.

Symptoms include a fever (100 °F or higher), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, feeling very tired, vomiting or diarrhea.

Not everyone that has flu has all of these symptoms.

In addition to yearly flu vaccination in adults, health officials are urging the highest risk groups (e.g., persons aged 65 years or older, children, pregnant women, persons with cardio-pulmonary disease and the immunocompromised) to prioritize vaccination.

Some, particularly the elderly population, may also benefit from the use of the newly available high dose or adjuvant vaccine.

Finally, it is important for all individuals to practice proper respiratory hygiene by covering their cough or sneeze; washing hands frequently or using hand sanitizer; disposing of tissues used for coughing or sneezing in a receptacle that is out of reach to children; avoiding touching the eyes, nose and mouth; and by staying home up to 24 hours after a fever has resolved.

While shortages of medications at individual facilities have been reported, there is no

local, regional or national shortage of either the flu vaccine or anti-viral medications.

Individuals can receive the flu vaccine at participating pharmacies or from their health care provider.

For more information on influenza, visit the Lane County Public Health website at www.lanecounty.org/government/county_departments/health_and_human_services/public_health.

City Council accepts grant applications

Florence City Council Grant Program will be accepting applications Jan. 1 through Feb. 24, at 5 p.m.

Applicants can apply for up to \$1,000. The program will be awarding a total of \$5,000 for financial year 2016-17.

Florence City Council has established the City Council Grant Program to facilitate nonprofit organizations with providing services in the community. It is designed to help the council achieve their stated goals, provide additional public benefits or meet identified community needs.

Applicant funding requests need to relate to at least one of the city council's goals and must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Organization is a recognized nonprofit organization or affiliate of such an organization; and
 - Organization is located within the City of Florence or serving City of Florence residents; and
 - Provides assistance for essential utilities, food, clothing or shelter; or
 - Provides educational or recreational opportunities for children or seniors; or
 - Generates/supports economic activity in Florence.
- The application also includes a letter of request of 1,000 words or less.
- The council will determine the final selection of applicants, prioritization of requests and fund allocations.

Future requests for funding will take past organizational performance and previous grant awards into account.


The City of Florence reserves the right to accept or reject applications and disperse funds as they see fit based on the outlined

City Council goals. It also reserves the right to ask for clarification of application answers. Grant awardees will be notified by March 20.

An application form and the city's goals are at www.ci.florence.or.us/council/city-council-grant-program-seeking-applications.

For more information, call the City of Florence at 541-997-3437.

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Florence Food Share provides food to those who are hungry in our community. If you have four hours a week available, we are in need of volunteers to staff our Front Desk and also act as Guides as clients walk through the pantry. Please call our volunteer coordinator, Gina Yates, @ 541-997-9110 (Monday - Friday, before noon) to learn more about volunteering. info@florence-foodshare.org 2190 Spruce Street.

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For more information 541-997-2497.

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