

County Health officials confirm seven flu-related deaths

Lane County Public Health officials recently 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 and while we will always have reports of individuals con-

tracting 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 period 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 cover-

ing 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.

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.

Williams featured artist at OPB this month

Oregon Pacific Bank is featuring the watercolor paintings of local artist Patricia Williams in its lobby during the month of January.

Williams is an award-winning artist with a degree in fine art. She has taken many workshops from artists in California and Canada, and has taught beginning watercolor in Fair Oaks, Calif.

Her work has been published locally and worldwide, purchased by California governments and private collections.

Her work has been accepted in the California State Fine Art Exhibit and KVIE Art Auctions. She has been in shows that have shown in the Haggin Art Museum and the California State Capitol.

In addition to her exhibit at OPB, come view her artwork at Florence Regional Arts Alliance (FRAA) Art Center on Maple Street in Old Town, where she is a member.

Artwork is also available online at www.patriciawilliamsart.com.

For more information, email her at artjewelrybypatti@gmail.com.



Watercolor by Patricia Williams at Oregon Pacific Bank.

Humane society to offer pet photos for Valentines Day

On Saturday, Jan. 21, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the community is invited to bring pets to the Florence Events Center to have them photographed in a special Valentine’s Day Booth.

Photographs cost \$5 and the proceeds go to the Oregon Coast Humane Society.

The only request is that animals be held, or kept on a leash.

The Friends of the FEC are celebrating animals during the months of January and February in Gallery One with the themed exhibit “For the Love of Animals.”

Paintings, photography, mixed media and 3-D art are interspersed throughout the gallery with photos of animals that are up for adoption at the

local animal shelter.

There will be raffle tickets sold during the Jan. 21 reception, with the winning ticket being drawn at 2 p.m. (need not be present to win).

A framed oil painting of your pet by talented local artist Ron Hildenbrand will be the raffle prize.

There will be refreshments for people and their pets, and admission is free. All that is asked is that guests bring a donation of dog or cat food to place in a special collection container.

All animal lovers are encouraged to attend this event, whether a pet owner or not.

For more information, call 541-997-4277.

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Meals on Wheels are available to people over the age of 60 who cannot get out much due to illness or advanced age and who are not eating properly, regardless of income. Cafe 60 is available for those who prefer to make new friends in a dining room setting.

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