

# H1N1 flu vaccine is now available to general public

By Karen Krien

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Those who haven't received their H1N1 vaccination are urged to do so.

Les Lacy, hospital administrator, reports that H1N1 vaccine is now available to the general public, including those over 65. He said the hospital's medical staff and a large percentage of those working at the hospital have already been vaccinated.

Mr. Lacy points to information from the director of health for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Jason Eberhart-Phillips, M.S., who remarks on the safety and efficacy of this vaccine. This is echoed by the Center for Disease Control. By receiving the vaccine, people may be less likely to get H1N1 and, if they do get this strain of flu, it may be a less severe case.

Dr. Eberhart-Phillips reports that the vaccine is remarkably effective in preventing disease, and is almost closely matched to protect people against the target virus. Current data from the Center for Disease Control shows the H1N1 vaccine is safe and effective.

Pregnant women, children (6 months to 24-years old) and those with chronic medical conditions remain the priority groups for vaccination. So, why are people waiting?

1) Perhaps the people don't think that H1N1 flu is a serious enough disease to bother getting the vaccine.

True, several new analyses of the mortality associated with this novel virus suggest that it is about 100-times less lethal than the strain that caused the 1918 pandemic, with only one death occurring in ev-

ery 2,000 cases.

But consider this, Dr. Eberhart-Phillips said, while this flu bug doesn't kill a large share of the population it infects, it infects as many people that nearly 10,000 Americans have died from H1N1-related causes. Another 213,000 are thought to have been hospitalized, most of whom are much younger than those who typically suffer serious flu infection in a normal year.

If a person can avoid even a small risk of hospitalization or death from H1N1 with a single dose of a safe vaccine, what have they got to lose in getting immunized?

2) Perhaps they believe that the epidemic is over, so that immunization isn't necessary.

Again, this is true. The virus activity has dropped off sharply in Kansas and most other states since peaking in late October.

But, consider this, the doctor said, while autumn's so-called "second wave" of H1N1 is clearly over, pandemics are notorious for re-emerging in unpredictable ways. Many experts believe that a third wave is coming, perhaps in response to holiday travel and the return of millions of schoolchildren in January.

Three-quarters of Kansans have neither had this disease nor gotten the vaccine. That leaves about 2 million people in Kansas who remain susceptible to infection, more than enough human hosts to sustain a large third wave of infections.

3) Perhaps people are unsure about the safety of the vaccine.

Again, true. The vaccine was licensed for use on millions of people after clinical trials could demonstrate safety on only a few thousand study participants. While there was every expectation that the new vaccine was as safe as each year's seasonal flu vaccines, there has always been a slight possibility that a rare, unanticipated side effect would emerge.

Dr. Eberhart-Phillips asks people to consider that fact that it hasn't happened. As of Dec. 4, after nearly 64-million doses of vaccine had been distributed, fewer than 5,000 reports of possible adverse reactions had been reported to the federal authorities. That is less than one-hundredth of 1 percent reporting a problem. Of those, all but 277 reactions have been classified as "non-serious," such as soreness at the site of the injection.

Among the reports that could be considered serious health problems, no unusual events or patterns have emerged. The reported events do not appear to have a common cause, and are most likely coincidental with vaccination, but safety monitoring continues.

While no vaccine or any medical intervention is completely without risk, Dr. Eberhart-Phillips said, the H1N1 vaccine is proving to be a very safe and very effective product. This much is certain: getting the vaccine is far safer than getting infected with the pandemic virus.



Mike and Michelle Stafford, 223 W. Emerson Street



Art Krueger, 120 W. Spencer Street

## - Bowling News -

### Wednesday Night Mens 12-16

Team standings: Bonny Solutions 34.5-21.5, Krien Steel 34-22, Cheyenne Bowl 33-23, Idalia JV 30-26, Haigler One 26.5-25.5, Wright and Wrong 25-27, Haigler Two 24-32, Bonanza Ford 9-11.

High game (scratch): Jim Wheaton 214, Mike Blecha 213, JD Hawkins 204.

High series (scratch): Bob Lipfert 561, Blecha 533, Bill Carpenter 522.

### Ladies Nite Out 12-17

Team standings: Gutter Gals 33.5-18.5, Dundy Ag 33-19, Wray Meat Packing 31-21, Strikers 28-24, Jersey Maids 28-24, Wright Carpet 26-26, Bankwest 22.5-29.5.

High game (scratch): Tammy Drommond 188, Kathy Blecha 182, Erica Harlan 179; (handicap): Harlan 233, Ilene O'Leary 233, Drommond 231.

High series (scratch): Blecha 518, Harlan 458, Drommond 450; (handicap): Blecha 626, Victoria Windell 623, Harlan 620.

# Last council meeting of the year held

By Peggy Horinek

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The St. Francis City Council met for their last meeting of 2009 Monday night. It was a brief meeting as the agenda was short and two council members were unable to attend.

The main topic of the evening was the band shell. After meeting with the architect, it has been determined that all the stucco on the exterior will need to be removed as well the roof removed.

There will need to be some rewiring, putting back the windows and exterior doors. The outside of the building will have to be repaired first so that the inside will not receive more damage and can be saved.

This will have to be a two step program, use the grant for repairing the outside and reapply for a second grant in a year or two for the repair of the inside.

Also discussed was when the band shell is completed, when and how to

best use the band shell for the public to see the inside and events when it could be open. The architect was surprised that the paintings were still there and took several pictures of them.

Volunteers will be needed in the future to help remove the stucco and do some of the work. This will also go toward the city's share of the grant.

### In other business:

There were three more cereal malt

license applications presented to the council. They were for Cheyenne Bowl, Diamond R and Majestic Service. All three were approved for 2010.

The city clerk, Mary Lampe, presented the bills that needed to be paid in 2009 and some money transfers to various accounts. They were approved. There were no building permits.

The next meeting will be on Monday, Jan. 11.

**A BRAND-NEW YEAR!**  
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**Missing Skeeter**  
 Wandered away from home on Dec. 16, 2009. He is a black and grey domestic short hair cat with a white spot on his chest and green eyes.  
 If you see him please call 785-332-3960 home; 785-332-5514 Nancy's cell or 785-332-8219 Scott's cell.  
 Skeeter is dearly missed

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*Very cold temperatures will reduce a vehicle's battery power so it's important to keep the connections clean, tight and corrosion free. Unfortunately, batteries don't always give warning before they fail completely. If your vehicle's battery is more than three years old, it is wise to replace it.*

**Quote of the Week:**  
*Only in America do we leave cars worth thousands in our driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.*

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