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## **Comanche County Health Department Encourages Residents to Get Their Flu Shots**

The Comanche County Health Department announced today its seasonal influenza vaccination clinic schedule for the upcoming flu season. Clinics will begin October 3, 2016.

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) and Comanche County Health Department recommend flu vaccination every year for everyone six months of age and older. The more people vaccinated, the less the chance that flu will spread in families and communities.

Each year in the United States, flu causes millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths. The flu vaccine is the best defense against getting the flu. Flu season usually starts in September or October and runs through April or May.

“It takes about two weeks after vaccination to become fully protected, so get everyone in your family vaccinated as soon as possible,” said Brandie O’Connor, Administrative Director for the Comanche County Health Department. “Protection from the flu vaccine lasts about six months, so people vaccinated in October should be protected through April of next year.”

Immunization is the safest and best way to protect people at high risk from the flu such as pregnant women, children and people with chronic heart and lung diseases. In addition to getting a flu vaccination, persons 65 and older, and those with chronic health conditions, should ask their doctor about being vaccinated against pneumococcal pneumonia. Pneumococcal pneumonia is a common and potentially serious complication of the flu. Unlike the influenza vaccine, the pneumococcal vaccine does not need to be given every year.

The flu mist will not be available as it is no longer recommended by the CDC.

The Comanche County Health Department will be providing flu vaccine using the following fee schedule:

- There will be no charge for families whose income is less than 185 percent of the federal poverty level. Those with health insurance, however, should bring their card. The insurance company will be billed for the vaccine and an administration fee.
- There will be no charge for adults 65 years of age and older. These adults should bring their Medicare Card or other health insurance card.
- There is no charge for children 18 years of age and younger who have no health insurance, whose health insurance does not cover flu vaccine, who are eligible for SoonerCare, or who are Native American or Alaskan natives.
- All others will be charged a fee of \$25 to cover the cost of the flu vaccine and the cost of administering the vaccine.

Vaccinations will be available on a walk-in basis during normal clinic hours, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, Monday-Friday.

The Comanche County Health Department will accept SoonerCare, Medicare, all private health insurance, cash, checks, or credit cards as payment for flu vaccine. For more information about flu clinics at the Comanche County Health Department, call (580) 248-5890.

