

H1N1 vaccine in short supply

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Local officials await shipments.

Gothenburg health officials are not alone in trying to obtain the H1N1 vaccine.

“Everyone is having the same problem—we’re all in the same boat,” said GMH hospital administrator John Johnson. “There are just incredible shortages of the vaccine.”

Despite the circulation of the H1N1 virus around town, Johnson said there haven’t been any hospitalizations so far this week.

Last week, one person was admitted with the virus.

“People are advised to follow the same precautions for both H1N1 and the seasonal flu,” he said.

Johnson said he thinks most people are seeing their family physician if necessary.

Because of fear about the virus—which can be deadly— and mixed stories from Washington D.C. and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Johnson encourages anyone who is sick or concerned to visit with their family doctor.

“The most consistent information is that people who have died from it have other complications,” he said.

While communities deal with shortages of the H1N1 vaccine, the seasonal flu vaccine has also been limited.

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"We usually get hundreds of doses," Johnson said.

GMH community health coordinator Myra Gronewold said they've only received a couple of hundred doses of the seasonal flu vaccine.

"But we're supposed to get 80% of our order this week or next," Gronewold said, noting that the hospital received more doses last week but gave them to businesses and people who had scheduled appointments.

As soon as GMH gets more of the seasonal vaccine, she said officials plan to have a drive-up clinic like they normally do.

Gronewold noted that West Central Health District in North Platte, 111 N. Dewey, has the H1N1 mist available that can be given to children ages 2 to 24.

District officials can be reached at 308-696-1201.

President Barack Obama declared H1N1 a national emergency last Friday.

The action is said to allow authorities to bypass certain federal requirements to deal more effectively with emergencies.

ebarrett@gothenburgtimes.com 308-537-3636