

Nursing Home News

by Suzanne Griffin

We had a very eventful week this past week. We had all of our regular activities, Sunday School, Bible Study, Church, and of course bingo as well as many extras this past week.

Monday night was a very special evening. We enjoyed having our families for our Thanksgiving Supper. There was food, food, and more food. But most of all, it was wonderful to spend time with our families around the table.

Wednesday afternoon we had our monthly birthday party. This month we have eight celebrating a birthday. Each of these received a gift from the members of New Salem Church which was the host for our party. We enjoyed having cake, chips and dip, and punch

at the party.

Thursday evening we had our monthly sing. This is always a good time for all of us.

As always I would like to thank the people who had part in last weeks services: Glen Sheffield, Christ Holiness Church, Mrs. Jane Wiggins, New Salem Church, First Baptist Church and James Judkins. With people like this, it makes my job much easier.

We still have residents to be adopted for Christmas. If you would like to help with this please give me a call at 758-4235. Thank you for your help.

The residents and staff at Miller Nursing Home would like to wish everyone a HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!!

More H1N1 vaccine becomes available in time to ensure children get second dose

Around 1,700 more doses of H1N1 nasal spray are available in time for children who need a second dose of vaccine to achieve full immunity, says Southwest Health District Health Director Dr. Jacqueline Grant. "The approximately 1,730 children aged 2 through 9 in our 14-county Health District who have gotten their first dose of vaccine will need another dose 28 days later to be fully protected against the pandemic H1N1 flu," Grant said. "Because the vaccine is in short supply, some parents have been anxious. We're pleased to have acquired more H1N1 nasal spray, which can be used to provide booster doses as well as to continue to vaccinate people who fall into high risk categories." The nasal mist, also known as LAIV for "live attenuated influenza vaccine," is made with live, weakened flu viruses, and is only for healthy people aged 2 to 49 who are not pregnant. "Children who received their first dose of H1N1 vaccine in the injectable form can get their second dose as a nasal spray as long as they don't have any of the contra-indications, such as compromised immune systems or conditions like asthma," Grant said.

"Since we don't know when we will get another shipment of H1N1 flu shots, parents may want to go ahead and get their children fully protected before the holidays." Southwest Health District received the new supply of H1N1 nasal spray vaccine late Nov. 19 and began transporting it to county health departments Nov. 20, said Grant. In addition, area childcare providers who had signed up to receive vaccine and met required federal and state guidelines also received an allotment from the new supply. "About 210 doses were made available to the childcare providers in the District who expressed willingness to accept LAIV,"

she said. Meanwhile, influenza-like illness continues to sicken residents in Southwest Georgia. As of Nov. 18, 13 new hospitalizations were reported, said District Epidemiologist Jacqueline Jenkins. "The hospitalizations included very young children and older adults," she said. "We are seeing a lot of these patients with co-infections of pneumonia." H1N1's highest attack rate is in children and young adults, who have no immunity to it, said Grant. "The lowest H1N1 infection rates are in adults 65 and older. However, older adults who do catch this virus are at risk of significant illness." Even though they are not among the first designated to receive H1N1 vaccine, people 65 and older can get vaccinated against pneumococcal disease, plus they are prioritized to receive anti-viral medication if they develop flu-like symptoms, said Grant.

"Older adults should contact their health care providers at the first sign of influenza, so they can begin receiving antivirals immediately. These medications are most effective when they are administered within the first 48 hours."

Eventually, older adults

- and others not in priority groups - will be able to get H1N1 vaccine. However, production delays continue to hobble vaccination efforts. "We don't know when we will be able to open up the H1N1 vaccine to more of the population," Grant said.

For now, Public Health continues to recommend prevention measures:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

- If you are sick with a flu-like illness, stay home until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours.

- Keep sick children at home.

- Get a seasonal flu vaccination as soon as you can.

- Stay informed - the situation may change rapidly, so listen for Public Health alerts and recommendations.

For more information about swine flu (H1N1), go online to www.southwestgeorgia-publichealth.org or www.cdc.gov/swineflu/ or call the District's toll-free Flu Hotline, 800-829-2255.

Pneumonia shot can help

Pneumonia has been identified as an important complication in severe and fatal cases of Pandemic H1N1 influenza virus infections. That's no surprise to medical professionals, since secondary bacterial pneumonia was a frequent cause of illness and death in past influenza pandemics. "During the 2009-2010 influenza season, pneumococcal vaccines can be useful in preventing secondary pneumococcal infections and reducing illness and death among those infected with influenza viruses," Southwest Health District Health Director Dr. Jacqueline Grant pointed out.

According to the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 70 million Americans who could take advantage of pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV) are unvaccinated. "CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends a single dose of PPSV for all people 65 years of age and older and for persons 2 through 64 years of age

with certain high-risk conditions," Grant said. "Most people in these groups are at increased risk of pneumococcal disease as well as serious complications from influenza infections." Grant noted that some patients hospitalized in Southwest Health District with H1N1 have developed pneumonia. "This is a serious concern not just nationally, but here in Southwest Georgia," she said. "These H1N1 patients are in Intensive Care Units and may be on ventilators as a result of secondary pneumonia infections."

High-risk conditions include:

- Chronic cardiovascular disease such as congestive heart failure
- Chronic pulmonary disease such as emphysema
- Diabetes
- Alcoholism
- Chronic liver disease such as cirrhosis
- Cerebrospinal fluid leaks
- Cochlear implant
- Compromised immune systems
 - from organ transplants
 - from diseases such as

leukemia and HIV - from chemotherapy

"Residents of nursing homes or long-term care facilities are also at increased risk," said Grant. "So are adults 19 through 64 who smoke or have asthma."

Meanwhile, she said, all county health departments have limited supplies of nasal spray H1N1 vaccine. H1N1 vaccine is being administered to priority groups most at risk of developing severe illness from the flu.

State officials said this week that H1N1 in flu shot form has been ordered for Public Health and shipments could begin arriving at Southwest Health District within a week.

"Eventually, there will be plenty of H1N1 vaccine for everyone who wants it. For now, we continue to ask the public to be patient," said Grant. "Seasonal flu vaccine is also temporarily in short supply because vaccine manufacturers switched production to H1N1 vaccine, but once they have met their commitments for H1N1, they will return to production of seasonal flu. No corners are being cut in the production of these vaccines."

The Miller County Unit of the American Cancer Society is now receiving donations for the annual



'Love Lights a Tree' Project

For a donation of \$5 or more, a light can be lit in honor or in memory of that special person or friend in your life! The tree lighting ceremony will be held Monday night, December 14, at 6 p.m. on the courthouse square. For more information, or to obtain a form, contact Betty Jo Toole, project chairman, at 758-5899 or 758-2188. Mail completed forms to American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 328, Colquitt, Georgia 39837.

Form (Please Print)

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Deadline for donations is December 7, 2009

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