



Kiowa County Health Department

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## **Kiowa County Health Department Offering Flu Shots at No Cost**

As the flu season brings record-breaking numbers of hospitalizations and deaths across the state, the Kiowa County Health Department is offering flu shots at no cost to recipients.

Reports from the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) indicate 3,440 flu-associated hospitalizations, and 153 deaths statewide since the season began in September. These numbers surpass any other flu season since the OSDH began tracking in 2009.

Public health officials remind the public that there are several weeks remaining in the flu season, and the number of hospitalizations and deaths will continue to increase. A flu shot is encouraged for anyone over the age of 6 months who hasn't been immunized. It is especially recommended for those over the age of 65, those who suffer from chronic heart and lung conditions, and pregnant women.

"It is not too late to get a flu shot," said Brandie Combs, regional director. "It takes up to two weeks for the vaccine to be fully effective. Flu season runs through May, so it is important to have protection as soon as possible."

The Kiowa County Health Department has high-dose vaccine for senior citizens that may not be available from health care providers. The vaccine must be administered by the end of May.

In addition to getting a flu shot, it is important to practice frequent hand washing and prevent the spread of germs by covering your sneeze and cough. Those who are having flu-like symptoms such as fever, body aches, fatigue and chills are encouraged to stay home from public gatherings until they are able to go 24 hours without a fever, and without fever-reducing medication.

### **Clinic days and times are as follows:**

#### **Monday through Friday 8am until 5pm**

However, it's recommended to arrive by 4pm as this is a walk-in service. Some clinics close for lunch due to staffing shortage. Please call ahead if you need to come in during the lunch hour. Anyone interested in receiving a flu shot at no cost should contact the Kiowa County Health Department at (580)726-3316 for further information. The clinic is located at 431 West Elm, Hobart, Ok. 73651.

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