

Health officials: H1N1 flu danger still out there

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NAMPA - Swine flu is not getting the attention it used to and it has health officials, who say it's still out there, worried.

Even President Obama is worried about a third wave of the flu hitting the nation. So much so, that he's declared Sunday the beginning of National Influenza Vaccine week.

Here at home, several hundred people turned out for free H1N1 vaccines Saturday afternoon in Nampa.

However, officials were prepared to help nearly triple that number.

The clinic went for four hours and at no time were there any real lines. Citizens were walking right up and minutes later getting shots.

While that sounds like a good thing, health officials said it could be a sign that people are forgetting just how dangerous H1N1 can be.

"Certainly we have the staff and the vaccinations today," said David Loper of the Southwest District Health Department. "For example, we could probably provided about a thousand shots."

But only about 250 people turned out for Saturday's clinic.

One of them was 72-year-old Gail Rose, whose age has bumped her out of priority groups.

Now that the vaccine is open to everyone, she wasted no time getting in for her shot.

"I was driving by here...and decided I'd just stop in and do it," Rose said.

Kara Senethavilay brought her two kids back for their swine flu booster shot.

"It's just important because anything we can do to prevent them from getting sick is an important thing to do," Senethavilay said.

Between now and September, the state reported 22 deaths from swine flu and confirmed another 284 people were diagnosed with it.

Although most of those happened in October, health officials say the risk of swine flu is still out there.

"Well we've seen certainly the H1N1 cases wane a little bit in the state and nationally," Loper said. "And also we don't just see as much national and local attention to H1N1 flu as well. But we still recommend people do get the vaccine. We may see a resurgence here in the later months of the winter."

While the clinics are now open to everyone, there are some things to remember:

Kids under 6 months of age cannot receive the H1N1 vaccine.

Children 6 months to 2 years of age can only get the shot.

Healthy people from 2 to 49 years can choose flu mist or the shot, but if their immune system is compromised, a shot is their only option.

Adults 49 years and older are restricted to the shot.

Southwest District Health will hold free clinics every Saturday this month from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the old Sportsman's Warehouse in Nampa.

Central District Health is doing vaccinations by appointment only.

<http://www.ktvb.com/news/health/Health-officials-swine-flu-danger-still-out-there-81074962.html>