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Drive-through and off-site flu clinics offer vaccine delivery options

Several District 2 Public Health Departments offered drive-through flu clinics this year. For some public health employees, this was their first experience providing flu shots in a drive-through clinic. But whether a first-time participant or a seasoned veteran, all employees expressed appreciation for their communities’ participation.

Based on the support from the communities, all of the clinics were considered successful and important take-away lessons were learned. Several vulnerable populations were served as people with limited mobility or a disability expressed their thanks for the convenience of being vaccinated in their vehicles. Also gained was experience in planning, coordinating, setting up and operating a drive-through dispensing site. These clinics gave public health staff first-hand knowledge of potential challenges in operating a drive-through dispensing site during a real emergency.

Franklin and Rabun Counties conducted their first drive-through clinics, while Habersham, Lumpkin and Stephens have held them in past years. In all, nearly 300 flu shots were provided at the drive-through clinics with an average throughput rate of six minutes per person.

In addition to drive-through clinics, health departments utilized off-site clinics as another method for delivering vaccinations. Off-site flu clinics allow health department staff to go to businesses, schools, and other organizations to provide flu shots. The relationships established through these off-site clinics could allow sites to be established as closed PODs in a public health event.

School-based flu clinics are another way that public health can provide immunizations for an at-risk group, specifically children and youth. School-based clinics offer convenience for parents by eliminating a special trip to the health department or health care provider to get their children vaccinated. This service also helps ensure that a larger number of the population is protected against influenza.

The key message about flu vaccination is that everybody needs to be protected against flu. Getting vaccinated is the first step in being protected against influenza. To help prevent the spread of germs, it is important to wash your hands often, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home if you are sick. For more information, visit: www.flu.gov or www.dph.ga.gov
Region B Healthcare Coalition surveys public health assets

The Region B Healthcare Coalition held its September meeting at the Hall County Fire Services Training Center where District 2 Public Health displayed emergency trailer assets. These units are a combination of state, district and county assets that would be made available to responders during an emergency. The equipment and supplies in the trailers supplement existing resources for surge capacity, decontamination, trauma, points or dispensing (PODs), alternative hospital care, incident command, or mass fatality incidents.

Trailers owned by the state stand ready for deployment to any area of Georgia upon request by a district or county and approval for use by the Georgia Department of Public Health. Two trailers contain a fifty-bed inflatable hospital and all the necessary equipment and supplies to be self-sustaining for 72 hours. This includes inflatable structures, generators for power, heating and air conditioning units, beds, medical equipment and medical supplies.

The decontamination trailer houses equipment to remove substances that may be harmful to an individual. This unit works by cleansing the individual and other items that may be contaminated and reclaiming the water into a bladder system. It includes a generator, water heater, heating and air conditioning unit, and all related equipment and supplies. The decon unit is mobile so it can be transported and set up near the incident or at a safe location near a medical facility or shelter.

The surge trailer holds cots that can be used during an event where employees are needed to remain at their job location, like a hospital, emergency operations center, or a shelter. The 2014 snow storm is a good example for use of this trailer. Northeast Georgia Medical Center requested use of the additional beds for their staff who remained at the hospital during the weather event.

The trauma unit provides additional assets in case of a large-scale accident where a number of people may have traumatic injuries typically associated with injury-causing disasters like a tornado. The mass fatality trailer is also self-sufficient with a dedicated generator and air conditioning unit.

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Above: Trailers are readied for viewing by the Region B Coalition members. Two hospital trailers (right with red stripe) house the inflatable structures for the portable hospital and all equipment and supplies needed for operation. The decon trailer (in the center) and the surge trailer (to the left) add capacity to existing resources in the district. Behind the truck (far left) is the mass fatality trailer.
Region B Healthcare Coalition surveys public health assets

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conditioning system, and could serve as additional capacity for hospitals and funeral homes.

During the regular meeting, members of the coalition discussed different scenarios of how the trailers could be used and the procedures for community partners to request the assets during an incident. Many of the coalition members said they were surprised at the comprehensive capabilities of the trailers and expressed appreciation that the trailers had been positioned in our area.

Region B Healthcare Coalition has members from hospitals, health care providers, nursing homes, EMA, EMS, public health, law enforcement, fire departments, coroners, funeral homes, volunteer organizations, non-profit organizations, and others. The coalition seeks to strengthen partnerships between all local response organizations. If you would like to participate in the coalition, please contact Jennifer Davis at jennifer.davis@nghs.com

Top: Donna Sue Campbell, (right) District 2 Public Health Healthcare Liaison, describes contents and set-up of the equipment included in the hospital trailers.
Bottom: Mark Palen, (center) District 2 Public Health Emergency Preparedness Director gives an overview of the trailer inventory.
Above: Brandin Gillman (Right), and Katie Jerwers (Left), with District 2 Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program set-up a mobile point of dispensing at the Annual Hall County Preparedness Fair. This event, hosted by Interactive Network for Kids (INK), focuses on preparedness activities for children and families, while showcasing local responder agency assets.

Beverly Barber collects insurance information from a client at Stephens County drive through clinic as Stephanie Langston directs them to the vaccination station.

The Habersham County Health Department staff offered flu shots and blood pressure checks during the Cornelia McDonalds customer appreciation day. At left, Donna Glaser (foreground), Elaine Wood (left) and Latise Marcus prepare to see McDonald’s customers. Above: Latisse Marcus chats with Ronald McDonald as they wait for customers.