

National Indian Health Board



Public Health Alert

Widespread Flu Activity

Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director along with Dr. Dan Jernigan, Captain, U.S. Public Health Service held a telebriefing on widespread Influenza (flu) activity, Friday, January 12, 2018 detailing the increased seasonal flu activity in the United States as well as the increase in physician/healthcare provider visits for flu-like symptoms. Data shows that in the past week the number of states reporting widespread flu activity increased from 36 to 46.

It is important to note that the flu is a contagious respiratory illness that can range from mild to severe and can lead to hospitalization or death. The best way to prevent the infection is the flu vaccine. The flu vaccine is recommended by the CDC for people ages 6 months or older. Individuals should talk to their healthcare provider about getting the flu shot. The vaccine is especially important for those who are high risk for complications (i.e. pneumonia and bronchitis) or live with/care for someone who is high risk for complications. High risk individuals include:

- Pregnant women
- Children
- Elders (**The flu is one of the leading causes of death among American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) elders.**)

Flu vaccines can be given at the following:

- Tribal Health

- IHS Clinic
- Local healthcare facility
- Mobile or community-based clinics
- Pharmacy or grocery store



In addition to the flu vaccine other ways to help prevent the spread of the flu is to wash your hands often, cover your coughs and sneezes, and to stay home if you are sick.

With the increase in flu activity people should be aware of the following symptoms:

- Fever/feeling feverish, chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny/stuffy nose
- Body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Vomiting or diarrhea (more common in children)

Those who become sick with flu may be prescribed antiviral drugs. Check the following to learn more about seasonal flu or access resources [here](#), [here](#), or [here](#).

A link to the CDC telebriefing transcript will be on the NIHB website when it becomes available.