



October 16, 2018

Contact:

Jose Arballo Jr., RUHS-Public Health

Senior Public Information Specialist

Office: 951.358.5599 Cell: 951.712.3705

Email: jarballo@rivcocha.org

Riverside County officials urge community to get flu shots

Riverside County health officials are urging residents to get their flu shot as a way to prevent spread of the illness.

The appeal from Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser came Tuesday as he reminded County Supervisors of the 100-year anniversary of the Great Pandemic of 1918, when hundreds of thousands of people died in the U.S. from the flu and millions more succumbed worldwide.

“Those numbers are staggering, and should never happen again,” Kaiser told Supervisors, some of whom received their flu shot at the start of the meeting. “But despite our many medical advancements since then, the best way to fight the flu is still to get your annual shot.”

While the severity of the current influenza season cannot be predicted, Kaiser noted that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that 80,000 people died during last year’s flu season. In Riverside County, there were 23 flu-associated deaths (people younger than 65) last flu season.

Health officials recommend anyone 6 months or older receive the flu shot and estimate there will be adequate doses available. The effectiveness of the vaccine will not be known for some time; last year's flu shot was estimated to be 40 percent effective.

“That directly means you’re 40 percent less likely to get the flu, and even if you do get it, it’s usually less severe,” Kaiser said. “Even in bad years that’s still better odds than you’d get without the flu shot, and in good years the protection is excellent.”

Residents can also slow the spread of the flu by properly covering their coughs or sneezes, washing their hands frequently and staying home from work or school when they are sick.

For more information about flu shots, click www.rivcoimm.org