



# Heartland Health Region

Healthy People, Healthy Communities, and Service Excellence in an Enduring Health System



For Immediate Release

Date: November 15, 2017

## 2017-2018 InFLUenza Season

*Residents Encouraged to get Immunized Before the End of Public Drop-In Clinics*

As the Influenza season continues, Heartland Health Region residents are being encouraged to make the most of the last few weeks of drop-in immunization clinics. The Heartland Health Region began its seasonal influenza immunization campaign on October 23 and it will run until December. Of the **56** public clinics offered, 20 remain throughout many communities in Heartland Health Region. After this time, Influenza vaccine will still be available until March 31, 2018 but appointments with Public Health will be required.

Immunizations are the best way to protect yourself, your family, and those around you from influenza. Influenza immunization is currently available, free of charge, to all residents six months of age and older.

"Influenza is more serious than the common cold and can cause significant illness, even death, especially in more vulnerable populations. We strongly urge members of the public to get immunized and help minimize illness and complications in our communities," commented Dr. David Torr, Medical Health Officer for the Health Region.

Australia and New Zealand are winding up their flu season and have experienced more severe illnesses this season particularly with the AH3N2 strain. Influenza activity in Saskatchewan is already increasing. The percentage of laboratory tests positive for influenza remains higher for this time of year compared to previous seasons. The majority of influenza detections continue to be A(H3N2). The vaccine being offered this year protects against A(H3N2), along with three other strains of the influenza virus. As of November 13, 2017 there have been approximately **6300** immunizations provided through the Heartland Health Region public flu clinics. This number does not include vaccinations given at any other private clinics or pharmacies.

For more information about influenza, the ongoing influenza immunization program (including clinic dates, times and locations), visit <http://hrha.sk.ca/programs-services/public-health-immunizations/>

Additional influenza and immunization information will be available on the health region's website and social media networks. You may also speak to your family physician or call the provincial HealthLine at 8-1-1.

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