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Flu outbreak has officials concerned

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Wednesday, 24 January 2018 20:20 Written by Shelia Mader



Tommy Harkrider Alice Pate, Sandon Speedling, Kaye Robinson and Rosie Smith

Published in Jackson
County Florida News

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Shelia Mader

Letters went home this week with Jackson County School students advising parents and guardians if their child or children had flu-like symptoms to keep them home. The letter stated that the Florida Department of Health reports the flu activity levels had increased sharply over the last several weeks. It stated that it is especially important that parents keep sick children at home to prevent spreading the flu virus to others.

Reportedly 83 people tested positive for the flu at Jackson Hospital in Marianna last week.

“We have sent several, several students home with fevers,” Jackson County School District RN Stephanie Folsom said. “If it’s above 100 degrees, we’re sending them home, just because most likely when they go get tested, it’s going to be the flu.”

Children with the flu may have several symptoms other than a fever. “They’re coughing, congested, aching, chills,” Folsom said. “When they’re breaking fever, they’ll start sweating a lot, just overall not feeling well at all.”

Superintendent of Schools Larry Moore expressed the importance of keeping the spread of the virus at a minimum, “If they do test positive for the flu, we ask them to keep those sick children home, or staff members, we ask them to stay home.”

“You can always call the hospital, you can call the nursing home, but those are our vulnerable members of our community,” Jackson Hospital Infection Control Nurse Kaye Robinsons said. “They’re sick, they’re elderly, and they need your protection.”

In a press conference at the Jackson County Health Department Thursday, officials advised it was not too late to get a flu shot. Health Department Officer Sandon Speedling said, “Now is the time for you as individuals and residents of Jackson County, if you haven’t received your flu shot, to get that. That is the single most important thing you can do to protect yourself and your family members.”

Flu shots are available at the county health department, local clinics, and many local doctors’ offices. They cautioned that while there was no shortage of vaccine today, there could be in the near future.

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