

Media Release

Monday, 22 April 2024

Tharawal AMS patients get flu jab to protect community

Tharawal Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) was a hive of activity last week (Monday, 15 April) as patients, young and old, flocked to the Airds centre for their annual influenza (flu) vaccination.

In the lead up to World Immunization Week, 24 to 30 April, local NSW Public Health Unit staff visited the centre to deliver flu, pneumonia and shingles vaccinations to 150 patients, who were also treated to a cuppa, pizza from Manoosh and Co, and entry into a raffle for a fresh fruit and vegetable box.

Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation Chief Executive Officer, Darryl Wright, praised the community for so enthusiastically turning out to get vaccinated.

“We had a strong turnout for this year’s flu clinic and we’re continuing to vaccinate each day in the medical centre,” Mr Wright said. “It’s great to know so many in our community will be protected as we head into this year’s flu season.”

Flu vaccinations began across Australia in mid-April to provide protection for the peak of the flu season, generally June to September.

Free influenza vaccines are available to eligible people under the National Immunisation Program, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and:

- children from six months to under five years of age
- people with serious health conditions (including severe asthma, diabetes, cancer, immune disorders, obesity, kidney, heart, lung or liver disease)
- pregnant women
- people who are 65 years of age and over

South Western Sydney Primary Health Network (SWSPHN) Chief Executive Officer, Dr Keith McDonald PhD, encouraged the wider community to also roll up their sleeves for the flu jab.

“After years of being overwhelmed with COVID-19 vaccine information it’s not surprising many people are experiencing vaccine fatigue,” he said.

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South Western Sydney PHN is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting general practitioners, practice nurses and other primary health providers to deliver the best possible care for their patients. Our aim is to improve access to quality local healthcare for all residents living in the Bankstown, Fairfield, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Camden, Wollondilly and Wingecarribee LGAs, areas which include but are not exclusive to the major traditional nations of Dharawal (Tharawal) and Gundangarra (Gandangarra).

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the waters and lands on which we live and work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

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“But it’s important to remember, just 15 minutes out of your day to get the jab not only protects you but protects those around you – your grandparents or a family member with an immune disorder, for example – from the effects of severe disease.”

Dr McDonald said it was important to have a flu vaccination every year because the vaccines were tailored to the different strains of flu circulating each flu season.

“And despite the common myth, flu vaccines do not cause flu,” he said. “Vaccines are a safe and effective way of protecting our community, in particular the most vulnerable in our community.”

You can book your flu shot through your doctor, pharmacist or Aboriginal Medical Service. Pharmacists can administer flu shots to children aged five and over. Parents with children aged under five should see their doctor.

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