By Jan Rahn
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Threat of catching the flu lurks everywhere it seems, with several cases of Type A influenza—assumed to be H1N1—confirmed in patients visiting the local clinics or hospital.

The seasonal flu isn't far behind, with the strain expected to hit with force in January or February.

According to a new government health survey, about one in five U.S. children had a flu-like illness earlier this month, with most of those cases likely being H1N1 (swine flu).

The findings also reported about seven percent of adults surveyed had a flu-like illness.

Clinics and the hospital are swabbing for Type A at the state's directive, assuming if a person tests positive for Type A it is the strain for H1N1, said Jessica Wykert, office manager at Grant Medical Clinic affiliated with Perkins County Health Services.

At the Colglazier Clinic in Grant there have been 12 confirmed cases of Type A (presumed H1N1) with 24 negative. Of 33 patients tested at the Grant Medical Clinic, 10 turned out positive for Type A (presumed H1N1).

For now, most youth who received the H1N1 nasal spray at a recent school clinic and have not become ill are probably out of the woods, as it takes two weeks to become effective.

Small allotments of the injectable vaccine for H1N1 have been arriving at the Grant Medical Clinic and Colglazier Clinic. The targeted recipients for the shot are pregnant women and children with chronic health problems such as asthma.

According to Dr. Cliff Colglazier, between the two clinics, 300 doses of H1N1 vaccine have been administered—60 as shots and 240 as nasal spray vaccinations.

Colglazier said the clinics are getting perhaps 10 shots per week and as they come in the clinics contact the priority groups and administer the vaccine within a very short time.

"I think we've both done well to distribute them as soon as they come in and both clinics distribute them appropriately," said Dr. Colglazier.

It's the hope of state officials that all pregnant women and others in priority groups will be vaccinated within the next couple months, and hopefully there will be enough shots available for others to receive the vaccine.

As a safety precaution, hospital and clinic personnel have been wearing masks around anyone who is ill, and visitors under the age of 19 are restricted from visiting patients in the hospital.

Seasonal Flu

The seasonal flu shots have not been received as quickly as expected.

"They're trickling in," said Colglazier. The small supply received will be gone this week, he said.

The Grant Medical Clinic ordered vaccine many months ago but no shipment has been received, said Wykert. They are expected to arrive next week, but the clinic does not expect the full order.

Because of the slow arrival of the vaccine, a shot clinic that was originally scheduled the first of October was postponed. A shot clinic may be held during an evening or on a Saturday once enough vaccine arrives, said Wykert.

The delay in receiving seasonal flu vaccine is apparently due to manufacturers putting the demand for production of H1N1 flu vaccine first.

Those who receive a flu shot will build up protection in about two weeks, and it will have

maximum effectiveness at six weeks.

The Centers for Disease Control announced that 114 million doses of seasonal flu vaccine will be produced by several manufacturers. Already, over 82 million doses have been sent. More will be sent as it’s made.