

PRESS RELEASE
November 3, 2004

MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
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(360) 427-9670 EXT. 419

TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

RE: Update on Flu Vaccine Program for Mason County

Ongoing discussions with Washington State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control have indicated that Mason County Health Department will receive an order of Flu vaccine. The number of doses that will be available is unsure at this time, but we expect the amount to range from 700 to 900 doses. We continue to receive numerous calls in our office with questions regarding availability of the Flu vaccine and have been referring the public to our automated information line for the latest update on availability. As limited supplies have been made available to the public we have all seen news reports where elderly and sometimes disabled persons have been required to stand in long lines for long periods of time in order to receive that vaccine. In most cases, the available vaccine is not sufficient to handle the number of people who are there requesting the vaccine. In order to plan for the administration of flu shots to our Mason County residents we are requesting that those individuals that are eligible for the Flu vaccine because of their risk factors, fill out a questionnaire and return it to the Mason County Health Department Office. We will need to receive these screening forms in our office (address) no later than close of business on Friday November 19, 2004. We will review the questionnaire for eligibility to receive the vaccine. If the number of returned eligible forms exceeds the available quantity of Flu vaccine, we will randomly select those who will receive the vaccine, until we have exhausted our supply. We believe this is the fairest way to determine who should receive the vaccine since there is no way to determine whether one individual has a greater medical need for the vaccine than another individual. We will not accept any applications from residents in other counties, as the other counties will be receiving their own limited allocation and will be providing it to their own residents. The questionnaire and screening forms will be initially available at our office and on the county website, www.co.mason.wa.us, and we will also provide them in selected locations throughout the community in the very near future. To check for locations, call our automated telephone line. We will tentatively plan to provide vaccinations to those selected sometime beginning the week of Monday November 29, 2004. Times and location are not yet finalized. We are also attempting to acquire the Nasal Flu Mist vaccine that is available for the non high-risk general public. We have been informed that a small quantity (possibly 70 doses) might be made available to us, and we are currently attempting to order our allocation. Washington State Department of Health has informed us that they have received an additional allocation of Flu vaccine that will be made available for children. As soon as we receive this order we will be distributing this to our private provider clinics that participate in the Vaccine for Children's program. A very few number of doses will be available through our Health Department office. For the latest information, please telephone our automated information line at (360) 427-9670 or (360) 275- 4467 ext. 599. For additional information, you may contact Lydia Buchheit at 360-427-9670, Ext. 404, or Steve Kutz at ext. 260.

Ron Henrickson
Mason County Administrator