

The Peninsula Health Care District is proud to serve
the residents of our Peninsula communities.



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*Appointed to complete
Susan Smith's term ending
December 2010.

VISION

*That all residents of the District enjoy optimal health
through education, prevention, and access to needed health care services.*

VALUES

Leadership, public education, personal responsibility, inclusion, stewardship and transparency.

MISSION

*To ensure Peninsula Medical Center provides needed core services, to
support programs that share our vision, and to do so in collaboration with other
providers and qualified members of our community.*

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Peninsula Health Care District
ADVANCING HEALTH THROUGH LEADERSHIP

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The Flu and You

Common Sense Approaches to Avoiding Infection

The annual flu season is upon us. This is not a new phenomenon—the first flu outbreak dates nearly three centuries ago—but this year the number of infections are expected to rise dramatically, and a new strain, H1N1, is an imminent concern (see box below).

Protecting the health of our community and providing resources to make good decisions about health are top priorities for the Peninsula Health Care District. There's no way around it: members of our community will get the flu. What we can do is prevent the spread of this uncomfortable, and in rare cases, fatal, illness and promote healthy habits.

Flu Prevention Starts With You

It is critical that each of us take a personal responsibility to prevent the spread of the flu. The information that follows is from the San Mateo County Health Department's brochure "What's New with the Flu" (www.smhealth.org/flubrochure) and offers advice on how to stay healthy this flu season.

How Can I Protect Myself Against the Flu?

- Get "regular" and H1N1 flu shots.
- Thoroughly and frequently wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizing gel.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Stay at least three feet away from someone who is coughing.

How Can I Prevent the Spread of Illness?

- Stay at home if you are sick.
- Teach everyone in your home to sneeze or cough into a tissue; throw away the tissue after each use.
- Cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow if tissues are not available.
- Wear a face mask when in the same room or car with someone who is sick.
- Heed the advice of health officials and respect their decisions to cancel public events or send children home from school.
- Prepare an emergency kit for your home to avoid trips to the store if illness strikes. The kit should include a thermometer, soap, hand gel, tissues, masks, disinfectant solution or wipes, and symptom-relief medicine.
- If someone in your home has the flu, try to keep the person in a separate room and have only one person provide care. Clean all surfaces and shared items such as phones, remote controls, toys, and door knobs with disinfectant.

H1N1

A new strain of influenza A called H1N1 (formerly known as the "swine flu") is infecting individuals around the world, including those here in San Mateo County. There have been millions of H1N1 cases reported so far in the United States, and the numbers of infections are expected to increase at a faster rate than the "regular" flu. In most cases the illness is mild or moderate in severity, can be treated in the same way as the regular flu, and the majority of infected individuals recover completely. However, pregnant women, seniors, children and individuals with asthma, diabetes, chronic lung disease, heart disease, and obesity are at a much higher risk of more severe illness.

The regular flu shot given out annually will not protect against the H1N1 virus; contact your physician or clinic to confirm if you should get both vaccines.

Flu Resources

Visit the following sites for the latest flu news:

San Mateo County Health System

www.smhealth.org/swineflu

Flu Hotline (650) 573-3927

Flu brochures are available in English, Spanish, Chinese, and Tagalog

www.smhealth.org/flubrochure or (650) 372-8572

Flu Shot Locations

www.flucliniclocator.org

Centers for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu or (800) 232-4636

The District wants to help you stay healthy this flu season. Stop by the District Office for a personal-sized hand sanitizer to keep with you at all times.



What are Flu Symptoms?

- High fever
- Sore throat
- Dry cough
- Headache
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Very tired
- Sometimes nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

When Should I Seek Medical Attention?

Regular flus can be treated with over-the-counter medications, fluids and rest. Medical attention is recommended if you have the following symptoms:

In Children:

Fast or difficulty breathing

Blue or gray skin color

Not drinking enough fluids

Severe or constant vomiting or diarrhea

Not waking up or interacting

Irritability and not wanting to be held

Flu symptoms improve and then return with fever and bad cough

In Adults:

Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath

Pain or pressure in the chest or stomach

Fever that does not improve with over-the-counter medicine

Sudden dizziness or confusion

Severe or constant vomiting or diarrhea

Flu symptoms improve and then return with fever and bad cough

Everyone needs to be on the same team this flu season—protect yourself and your family by staying informed, taking precautions, and following the advice of health professionals.



CEO MESSAGE

A Community Approach to Health Care Reform

Discussions about health care reform have reached the level of politics and religion—they are topics one should avoid unless prepared for a heated, passion-filled debate. While there is no question that we need health care reform at the national level, let's not wait for modified financing structures, coverage models, and thousands of pages of regulations—we can begin our own personal health reform today that can benefit the entire community.



I'd like to present a different approach to reform—one in which individuals make small changes in their personal routines that can result in improved health status for the individual and the community. It's an approach that recognizes and integrates the value of relationships, social networking,

and community involvement upon one's health. I am talking about the AARP/Blue Zones Vitality Project that is taking place in the town of Albert Lea, Minnesota.

Launched this past January, the people of Albert Lea are enacting the principles discovered by Dan Buettner, whose work has confirmed that lifestyle habits play a greater role in increasing longevity than genetics do. The Vitality Project is a city-wide initiative that challenges individuals to make simple, real changes in their everyday habits: get on the home scale regularly; stop using remote controls; remove television from the dining area and kids' rooms; use a bike rather than a car; form "the walking school bus" where groups of children walking to school with adult supervision; and many others. Businesses are also implementing health-friendly changes to corporate policies.

So what are the results? While the project is too new to report added life years, citizens

are tracking their progress with an online tool called the Vitality Compass. Results include:

- Reduced blood pressure and blood sugar
- Weight loss
- Selecting healthy options at restaurants
- Reduced TV and junk food consumption
- Formation of neighborhood walking clubs

Why can't we have an "Albert Lea Experience" here in our District? I encourage you to visit the Vitality Project's website (www.aarpmagazine.org/health/vitality-national/index.html), review the Active Home Checklist and reflect on the small changes you can implement in your daily routine. The journey to good health begins with a single step.

Cheryl A. Fama

The Peninsula Health Care District announces, with great sadness, the passing of former District Board member Sue Smith, who served our communities for more than 20 years. Our appreciation extends to Sue's family and all who knew her.

Mills-Peninsula Health Services Prepares for H1N1

By Kim S. Erlich, MD
Medical Director, Infection Control, Mills-Peninsula Health Services

As the H1N1 virus spreads throughout the world, the medical and scientific communities are working tirelessly to develop strategies to contain, treat and prevent this infection. The Infectious Diseases physicians, Infection Control Department, Emergency Department and administration at Mills-Peninsula Health Services have been working with the San Mateo County Department of Health to implement a county-wide, coordinated approach to deal with this pandemic.



Kim S. Erlich, MD

A Proactive Plan of Action

In anticipation of increasing numbers of patients with H1N1 who require hospitalization, Mills-Peninsula has developed a plan to effectively manage an influx of large numbers of patients, including opening additional beds if necessary. Mills-Peninsula has an ample supply of antiviral medication, face masks, hand sanitizer, and other equipment to protect the hospital staff during this outbreak. Thousands of doses of seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccines have been ordered. Vaccination of health care workers has been given top priority, in order to protect them against both types of flu and to insure that the hospital remains fully staffed during this pandemic.

Patients who come to Mills-Peninsula with a flu-like illness that could be H1N1 are placed in a private room while awaiting results of diagnostic tests. This will help prevent transmission of the flu to other patients, health care workers, and visitors. Physicians and nurses caring for a patient with the flu wear protective face masks and follow strict infection control guidelines to protect themselves, and to prevent the spread of the virus. Visitors with flu-like symptoms are asked to postpone their visit until their illness has resolved.

Protect Yourself

The Mills-Peninsula Infection Control Department strongly recommends that everyone who is a candidate for vaccination get both the regular and H1N1 vaccines. These vaccines are safe and effective, and should be given as soon as possible during this flu season. Vaccination can be obtained from physician offices, vaccine clinics, and some commercial establishments (see resource guide on page 1). Individuals who develop flu-like symptoms should call their physician to see if they should be tested for the flu or treated with antiviral medications, and should stay home from work or school until they are no longer feeling ill and have had no fevers for at least 24 hours without the use of anti-pyretic agents such as acetaminophen.

Senior Care in the Comfort of Home

There are many like Robert, an elderly gentleman with no relatives who lives alone in Burlingame. He suffers from diabetes, heart arrhythmia and severe rheumatism, and relies on a walker.

Recently, Robert suffered a fall, and was hospitalized at Peninsula Medical Center. His friend called Seniors•At•Home, a program of Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties, to inquire about home care. While Robert could not afford the cost of this type of care, Seniors•At•Home offered him a scholarship funded by a grant from the Peninsula Health Care District. This allowed Robert to return home and avoid an extended stay in the hospital or a skilled nursing facility.

Once at home, Robert's requirements were carefully assessed by a Seniors•At•Home nurse. He was matched with a caregiver who assisted him with all of his day-to-day needs and paid special attention to his routine and preferences. The caregiver helped Robert with showering and dressing, meal preparation, laundry and housekeeping. She also worked with him on his physical therapy exercises and took him for walks.

Thanks to the Seniors•At•Home program and support from the District, Robert was able to safely recover from his injuries in the comfort of his own home and maintain his fiercely-held independence. He continues to thrive, having had no further falls or re-hospitalizations, and is active at his local senior community center.

For more information about Seniors•At•Home, please call (415)449-3777 or visit www.seniorsathome.org.

