

Local health centers prepare for disease outbreaks in Kirksville

BY ANDREW MANGRUM
Staff Reporter

Despite budget cuts, Adair County and Truman State are preparing for outbreaks of infectious disease as influenza season approaches.

Truman has taken steps to prevent the spread of diseases such as meningitis or Ebola. During the summer, the Missouri legislature signed into law Senate Bill 748, which requires students who live on college campuses to have a meningitis vaccination starting July 2015. Truman required all students living on campus this year to receive the vaccination instead of waiting for the legislation to take effect.

Brenda Higgins, Director of Student Health, said a Truman student contracted meningitis a few years ago. She said the school sent out mass notifications to any students who might have been in contact with the infected student. She said antibiotics were prescribed to all students who might have needed them. Higgins said they managed to keep the disease isolated to just one student because measures were taken to keep the student body safe.

Higgins said Truman is following the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control in regards to preparedness for Ebola by asking students about travel history, as well as adding personnel who specialize in protective care to its staff. Higgins said Northeast Regional Medical Center is equipped with protective gear and is prepared for any outbreak of disease.

“Truman students should feel confident that we are knowledgeable about national guidelines to make sure that we are organized, competent and ready, even knowing that we are at a low risk for such an occurrence,” Higgins said.

Ron Stewart, Northeast Missouri Emergency Planner, said Missouri’s Department of Public Health is not able to have nurses trained to handle a specific sector of medicine because of a lack of funds. He said for the past couple of months, core public health funding from the state has been withheld, leaving the local government to fund local health departments. Stewart said the general public does not notice these kind of budget shortfalls until there is an outbreak of a high-profile disease such as Ebola.

“Many health departments have been looking at what services they are going to have to reduce or cut, as well as staffing,” Stewart said.

Jim LeBaron, Adair County Health Department Administrator, organized an Oct. 23 drive-through flu shot clinic. He said the annual event involved volunteers, health department workers, the Red Cross, Kirksville’s fire and police departments and Truman nursing students.

LeBaron said with 50,000 people worldwide dying every year from influenza and pneumonia, drives such as this are important for public health. He said the health department was able to administer 800 flu shots during the drive.

LeBaron said they gave the flu shots while participants were in their vehicles, because it’s a good drill for what they would do in the event of a pandemic. He said they can use this method to mass-dispense medicine on a larger scale without necessitating a congregation of people.

“The drive is the fastest and most efficient way,” LeBaron said. “It’s our job to make sure that that happens.”

Ballot Language Missouri General Election

Constitutional Amendment No. 2

Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended so that it will be permissible to allow relevant evidence of prior criminal acts to be admissible in prosecutions for crimes of a sexual nature involving a victim under eighteen years of age?

If more resources are needed to defend increased prosecutions additional costs to governmental entities could be at least \$1.4 million annually, otherwise the fiscal impact is expected to be limited.

Constitutional Amendment No. 3

Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to:

- require teachers to be evaluated by a standards based performance evaluation system for which each local school district must receive state approval to continue receiving state and local funding;
- require teachers to be dismissed, retained, demoted, promoted and paid primarily using quantifiable student performance data as part of the evaluation system;
- require teachers to enter into contracts of three years or fewer with public school districts; and
- prohibit teachers from organizing or collectively bargaining regarding the design and implementation of the teacher evaluation system?

Decisions by school districts regarding provisions allowed or required by this proposal and their implementation will influence the potential costs or savings impacting each district. Significant potential costs may be incurred by the state and/or the districts if new/additional evaluation instruments must be developed to satisfy the proposal’s performance evaluation requirements.

Constitutional Amendment No. 6

Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to permit voting in person or by mail for a period of six business days prior to and including the Wednesday before the election day in all general elections?

State governmental entities estimated startup costs of about \$2 million and costs to reimburse local election authorities of at least \$100,000 per election. Local election authorities estimated higher reimbursable costs per election. Those costs will depend on the compensation, staffing, and, planning decisions of election authorities with the total costs being unknown.

Constitutional Amendment No. 10

Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to require the governor to pay the public debt, to prohibit the governor from relying on revenue from legislation not yet passed when proposing a budget, and to provide a legislative check on the governor’s decisions to restrict funding for education and other state services?

State governmental entities expect no direct costs or savings. Local governmental entities expect an unknown fiscal impact.

Source: kirksvillechamber.com

LANGUAGE | Scholar discusses the wonders of language and linguistics

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to Truman twice before for a public presentation and a masters class, but this visit included four events and appealed to a wider audience.

“We never brought anyone in at this level before,” Scuderi said.

Scuderi said the classical and modern languages department was given \$3,500 in grant money to cover expenses and an honorarium, as well as faculty and student dining with Cravens. He said students and professors outside the Romance language major were able to gain from Cravens’ presentations to at least a basic level. Scuderi said it was filmed for classroom use as well.

Tom Capuano, Spanish and Portuguese professor, said he helped Scuderi host

the visit and participated in Cravens’ Romance language capstone roundtable discussion. He said the seminars were filmed to use for future Truman Week classes as well as the course about linguistics of the Romance languages and senior capstone projects. He said the capstone seminar showed Romance language majors how to find topics of interest and work with the faculty members of the Romance Language Steering Committee to make an effective piece of work. The committee aids Romance language majors selecting and preparing their capstone project.

Capuano said classroom discussions, especially for those who consider themselves talented in foreign language, can be challenging. He said the classroom

is like a miniature immersion experience. With an open mind, he said students of any level can gain new auditory skills and the ability to better express themselves even in simple ways. He said he hopes to show students how to have an appreciation for the wonder of language.

“When a student wants to explore a language, they are going to find real mysterious things going on, even in their own speech,” Capuano said. “They should allow it to overwhelm them.”

Capuano said he appreciated the support of Susan Thomas, Vice President of Academic Affairs, James O’Donnell, Dean of the School of Arts and Letters, Cravens and everyone who helped make this visit a success. Capuano said it

is fulfilling to see students of any discipline come together around a topic they are passionate about.

“It is important to get the big picture,” Capuano said. “Dr. Cravens helped us see that.”

Sophomore Megan Mathene, a creative writing major, said she attended Cravens’ seminars because she wanted insight about how other languages are changing and how she can keep up to date. She said learning a foreign language has been challenging but enlightening. She said the experience has changed her perception about culture and now plans to study abroad because of this.

“I didn’t know what to think of Italian until I jumped right into it,” Mathene said. “Then I fell in love with it.”

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