

Virology Newsletter

Fall 2020

What is “the flu?”

“The Flu” is often confused with stomach “bugs” that can cause vomiting/diarrhea. **INFLUENZA** has more “head cold” symptoms than “stomach” symptoms. Influenza symptoms are similar to the common cold, but are *much more severe* and have a *very rapid on-set*.

Hallmark influenza symptoms include:

- ⇒ **sudden onset**
- ⇒ **high fevers, greater than 101F**
- ⇒ **cough**
- ⇒ **sore throat**
- ⇒ **muscle or body aches**
- ⇒ **fatigue and tiredness**
- ⇒ **headaches**
- ⇒ **runny or stuffy nose**



Influenza can remain infective in the human body for a week. Outside the body in colder environments, the virus can remain infective for longer. Contact with saliva, nasal secretions, feces, and blood from an infected person can transmit the virus.

The elderly, the very young, and the immunosuppressed are at greater risk of complications and hospitalization from influenza. Receiving the influenza vaccine is voluntary, however the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) considers people living with HIV to be at higher risk for influenza-related issues, and highly recommends vaccination.

How can I prevent “the flu?”

The best protection and prevention of influenza includes the following:

- **Get vaccinated!**
- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Wash your hands often
- Minimize contact, when possible, with those who have symptoms or have been diagnosed with influenza
- Disinfecting your environment can also help with transmission prevention, ie: hand sanitizers in the store.
- Following COVID-19 precautions like wearing a mask and social distancing also help prevent influenza!

Influenza vs. COVID-19

It is difficult to distinguish between influenza symptoms and symptoms of COVID-19. This year, if you are presenting with respiratory symptoms and fever, it is likely that you will be tested for both COVID-19 and the flu.

IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS:

Please call UIHC at 319-384-9010. This phone number will direct you to the influenza-like-illness clinic, who can assess you by phone or video visit and schedule testing for both influenza and COVID-19.

Thank you for keeping our community safe by calling ahead when you have these symptoms!

Where can I get my influenza vaccine?

At UIHC:

Medicine Specialty Clinic: Please call 319-356-8133 to schedule an appointment. Walk-ins are available, but appointments are preferred

Iowa River Landing: Walk-in appointments welcome

Family Medicine Clinic : UIHC main campus and various locations; Scott Blvd, North Dodge, etc. Walk-in appointments welcome

If you are not local to UIHC, please check with your primary care provider's office locally, or call staff to help you find the best location to access the vaccine. There are also community clinics/sites offer the vaccine free of charge or at very low cost, and pharmacies also offer vaccines.

Feel free to call the **Program Nurse, Tracy, at 319-335-7605**, if you have questions related the influenza vaccine process or symptoms. Thanks! ☺

Please remember to let your nurse or provider know you've received the influenza vaccine, or request one during your clinic visit!

Influenza vaccines are composed of either inactivated or live attenuated (weakened) virus, **but they cannot transmit “the flu.”** Individuals living with HIV should **NOT** receive live-attenuated virus such as the “flu mist” or other nasal formulations.

Side effects of the vaccine include achiness, fatigue, and low grade fever, but these are short-lived and do not carry the dangerous threat of complications associated with an actual influenza infection. These side effects are *very mild* in comparison to influenza and can be treated with Tylenol or ibuprofen.

Welcome Tracy Peters, LPN to our Team



I am a new Licensed Practical Nurse in the Virology Office. I am native Iowan and have been at UIHC for 38 years. Most of my experience has been in research. My research experience started in the late 1980s while working in the hemophilia center. This is when HIV made its debut in our hemophilia population. Back then, AZT was the only treatment in our toolbox. It is so great to see how treatment of this disease has improved since then. I plan to be a point person for you, whether you are having a health issue, need a refill or whatever else strikes you. I see my job as a facilitator on the clinical side of your care. I enjoy spending time with my granddaughter (7) biking, crafting, cooking and spending time with my new rescued cat Gus!

Thank You and Good Luck to Abby Dalton!

Hello,

I have news to share, it is with great sadness that I wanted to inform you that I will be leaving the Ryan White Program. I have enjoyed my time here in the program. I have met incredible people and have learned a great deal. I am excited to be starting a new position within the UIHC Hospital.

Best Wishes,

Abby Dalton

Thank You and Best Wishes to Sarah Hambricht

It is with sadness that I transition away from the Ryan White Program at this time. I have really enjoyed working and learning with all of you over the past 5 years. My last day within the program will be October 22, 2020 and I will be transferring departments within UIHC. Thank you to everyone who has made an impact on my knowledge and skills during my time with the Ryan White Program. Every patient is so fortunate to be involved with such a caring, supportive and creative team at UIHC and leadership at the state level. These leaders are truly passionate about ending the HIV epidemic and assisting persons living with HIV in the best way possible. I truly wish everyone the best and thank you for everything!



COVID Relief

It has been a tough summer for all of us with the one-two punch of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the derecho in August that did so much damage in eastern Iowa. Fortunately, with added support from our funders at the federal and state levels, the Ryan White Program has been there to help make it easier as patients have had to contend with job loss, property damage, and food insecurity. The Ryan White Program has been able to provide emergency financial assistance above and beyond the services we normally provide to help meet identified needs and make recovery easier. So far 235 of our patients have accessed assistance.

We are grateful to our funders for helping us to be there for Iowans living with HIV when they needed us, and appreciate the chance to serve you. If you have questions about whether you would be eligible for COVID relief assistance through the Ryan White Program, ask to speak to a case manager at your next appointment.

Insurance Happenings

Medicare recipients who are case managed at UIHC or are not case managed:

Medicare clients who are case managed by UIHC or not case managed by any agency should have received a letter about Medicare's annual open enrollment period October 15 to December 7. During this time, you can review the 2021 Medicare prescription drug plans to determine whether your current plan is still the best plan for you next year, or whether you could save money by changing plans.

I can run your comparison and call you with the results. If your current plan is still the least expensive, I'll tell you that over the phone. If we find you can save money, I'll call you to set up a time when we can meet to go over the comparison with you. I will be able to start doing comparisons in early October and will do them on a first come-first served basis. You were mailed two forms regarding this enrollment. One is a release of liability and the other is to create an account to view the Part D comparisons. Please complete the forms and mail them back in the pre-paid envelope.

If you would prefer a face to face meeting, call **Angela at 319-335-7309** or email: angela-speers@uiowa.edu to schedule an appointment.

Important note: If you are covered by a Medicare Advantage plan and you receive notice this month that your plan will not be offered in 2021, please call and make an appointment so we can discuss the best option for you moving forward.

ADAP recipients

ADAP's annual open enrollment period is coming up. During this time, the Iowa Department of Public Health and its legal advisory plans to determine whether the current ADAP plan is still the best plan for you next year, or whether it would be beneficial to make a change.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns please feel free to call the field benefits specialist, Angela Speers, at 319-335-7309 or email angela-speers@uiowa.edu. She will be happy to help answer questions and works closely with your case manager to ensure your insurance needs are being covered. I look forward to connecting with each of you in the coming months as we proceed with ADAP open enrollment.

Medica Premium Refund Letter:

We have received notice that clients who were on Medica in 2018 or 2019 have received letters about a premium refund for plans.

Medica is only able to make a certain amount of profit on Marketplace plans, and if they make too much they have to pay some of it back to the members for that year. They will be sending checks to all members. We do not know how much these checks will be, but because ADAP paid these premiums the check should be signed over to ADAP.

If you received a letter/check please sign the back of the check and write "for deposit by NuCara pharmacy only" and then give it to your case manager. If you have any questions please contact your case manager or **field benefits specialist Angela Speers at 319-335-7309**.

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to assist low-income families with meeting the cost of home heating. Individuals/Families must meet income eligibility requirements to receive assistance through this program. Applications will be accepted on a first come/ first serve basis at your local Community Action Agency. Disabled and Elderly households can start to apply on October 1st, 2020. You may also apply on October 2, 2020 if you have a disconnection notice or your service is currently disconnected. All other eligible households may submit applications from November 1, 2020- April 30, 2021. You will need to bring three months' worth of income, your social security card, and copies of your heating/electric bills with you when you apply. Please contact your local Community Action Agency for their hours of availability. If you need help locating the agency responsible for LIHEAP in your county, please contact a member of our social work team. See below for basic eligibility information:

Size of Household	Annual Gross Income
1	\$22,330
2	\$30,170
3	\$38,010

The Johnson County office is located at 367 Southgate Ave. Iowa City, IA , (1-319-739-0100),
website: <https://www.hacap.org/>

Did You Know???...

There is a **Care Team** function in your medical record (EPIC) at UIHC that allows healthcare professionals to provide coordinated care specific to your clinical needs and circumstances. If you are enrolled in Ryan White Part B Case Management at UIHC, your Case Manager is often added as part of your Care Team. The function allows your Case Manager to receive more timely information if you have been admitted or perhaps lab results for annual paperwork, etc. We encourage you to talk more with your Case Manager if you have questions or concerns.

Support Group:

Consider joining UIHC's Support Group for People Living with HIV. We are focused on connecting with others in a time when it is exceptionally difficult. Share experiences, resources, coping strategies, and just chatting and getting to know others.

When: First Wednesday of the month from 4:00pm-5:30pm

Where: Online for now!

Contact: Daniel Czachura, BHC

Phone: 319-383-3621

Email: daniel-czachura@uiowa.edu

U=U

Undetectable

=

Untransmittable

A person living with HIV who has an undetectable viral load does not transmit HIV to their sexual partners.

Taking your medications every day and being virally suppressed is the healthiest, safest thing you can do for you and your partners.



World AIDS Day – December 1, 2020 THEME: Global Solidarity, Shared Responsibility



Global solidarity and shared responsibility requires us to view global health responses, including the AIDS response, in a new way. It requires the world to come together to ensure that:

Health is fully financed. Governments must come together and find new ways to ensure that health care is fully funded. No one country can do it alone. Domestic and international funding for health must be increased.

Health systems are strengthened. Investments in the AIDS response in the past few decades have helped to strengthen health systems and have been supporting the COVID-19 response. But more needs to be done to further strengthen health systems and protect health-care workers.

Access is ensured. Life-saving medicines, vaccines and diagnostics must be considered as public goods. There must be global solidarity and shared responsibility to ensure that no individual, community or country is left behind in accessing life-saving health commodities.

Human rights are respected. A human rights approach applied everywhere will produce sustainable results for health. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fault lines in society and how key populations have been left behind in many parts of the world.

The rights of women and girls, and gender equality, are at the center. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected women's livelihoods, which have been disproportionately affected by lockdown measures, and lockdowns have resulted in an increase of violence against women in household settings. Women must be included in decision-making processes that affect their lives. The world cannot afford rollbacks in decades of hard-won gains in gender equality.

(Source: unaids.org 2020)

PITCH Virtual Meet and Greet

**4th Thursday of the Month
at 6 pm CT starting on
April 23, 2020**

www.pitchiowa.com

EDUCATE

UNITE

ADVOCATE

ASSIST

EMPOWERMENT

LIVE!!!!



Register in advance for this meeting:

<http://bit.ly/PITCHMeetandGreet>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Unfortunately, we had to postpone the PITCH annual Wellness Summit so we want to offer a way for Iowans living with HIV and our support system to connect with other Iowans. Social distancing living with HIV in Iowa, especially rural Iowa, can be a challenge. We hope you will join us so we can support one another through this medical crisis.

PITCH (Positive Iowans Taking Charge) is a statewide non-profit organization with a clear mission: To create an atmosphere where HIV+ people can unite, advocate, and assist other HIV+ people for better health and wellness



DEA Prescription Drug Take-Back Day Collection Site Locator Now Available

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day collection site locator is now available, allowing consumers to search for a nearby location to dispose of unneeded, unwanted, or expired medications on **Saturday, October 24, 2020**. On this day from 10 AM to 2 PM, thousands of DEA-coordinated collection sites will be available across the country, and consumers are encouraged to use this unique opportunity to safely and legally dispose of any unneeded medications, including prescription painkillers and other controlled substance medications, which can only be accepted for disposal when law enforcement is present.

The take-back service is free and anonymous, with no questions asked, DEA reminds consumers. Participating sites will accept tablets, capsules, and all other solid dosage forms of unwanted medication. Personal information may be blacked out on prescription bottles, or medications may be emptied from the bottles into bins provided at the locations. Check the DEA collection site locator often, as new locations will be added until October 24, 2020.

Consumers have disposed of millions of pounds of unwanted medication during previous DEA Take-Back Days. At the last Take-Back event in October, 2019, over 441 tons of unwanted drugs were collected at over 6100 sites across the United States. More information about this program is available on the DEA's National Take-Back Initiative website.

Also note that the **UIHC Ambulatory Care Pharmacies** now permanently host several **MedSafe drug collection bins** for the safe disposal of unwanted medications (including controlled substance medications in Schedules II, III, IV, V) held by the ultimate user (a patient) or the ultimate user's legal representative. These bins are currently operating in the following UI Health Care Ambulatory Pharmacy locations: **Discharge, General Hospital, and Pomerantz Level II**. And lastly, listed below are **other public locations** within 100 miles of Iowa City (as denoted by the DEA) where unwanted medications may be taken for safe, permanent disposal. However, it would be prudent to advise patients to call ahead to confirm a site's ability to receive back medications for disposal, especially controlled substances.



Annual Data Needed

Every year, the Ryan White Program is required by our funders at the Health Resources and Services Administration to collect income and housing information on the patients we serve. We then report the information in a deidentified way so that no one outside our clinic has access to the information on an individual basis.

Most of our patients are clients of one of the Part B case management agencies around Iowa, and submit their income and housing information directly to their case manager. Around 30% of our clinic patients do not have a case manager, however, so we must contact those patients directly to get this information. That's one of the reasons why we created our pre-appointment survey that most of our patients have taken. It's allowed us to gather this information on patients who are not case managed without bothering you directly. In fact, the survey has helped us collect income and housing information on more than half of our non-case managed patients already this year.

For patients who do not have a case manager and who do not have an appointment before the end of the year, a member of our care team will be reaching out to you via text or phone before the end of the year, asking you the following information:

- 1) how many people are in your household (report on your taxes)
- 2) what is your estimated annual income before taxes
- 3) to describe your living situation.

Please take the time to respond to the best of your ability. We understand that these can be uncomfortable questions for some, and we feel somewhat uncomfortable asking you for this information. However, supplying the deidentified data is a condition of our funding, and doing so allows us to continue to provide the medical care and support services our patients have come to expect from us.

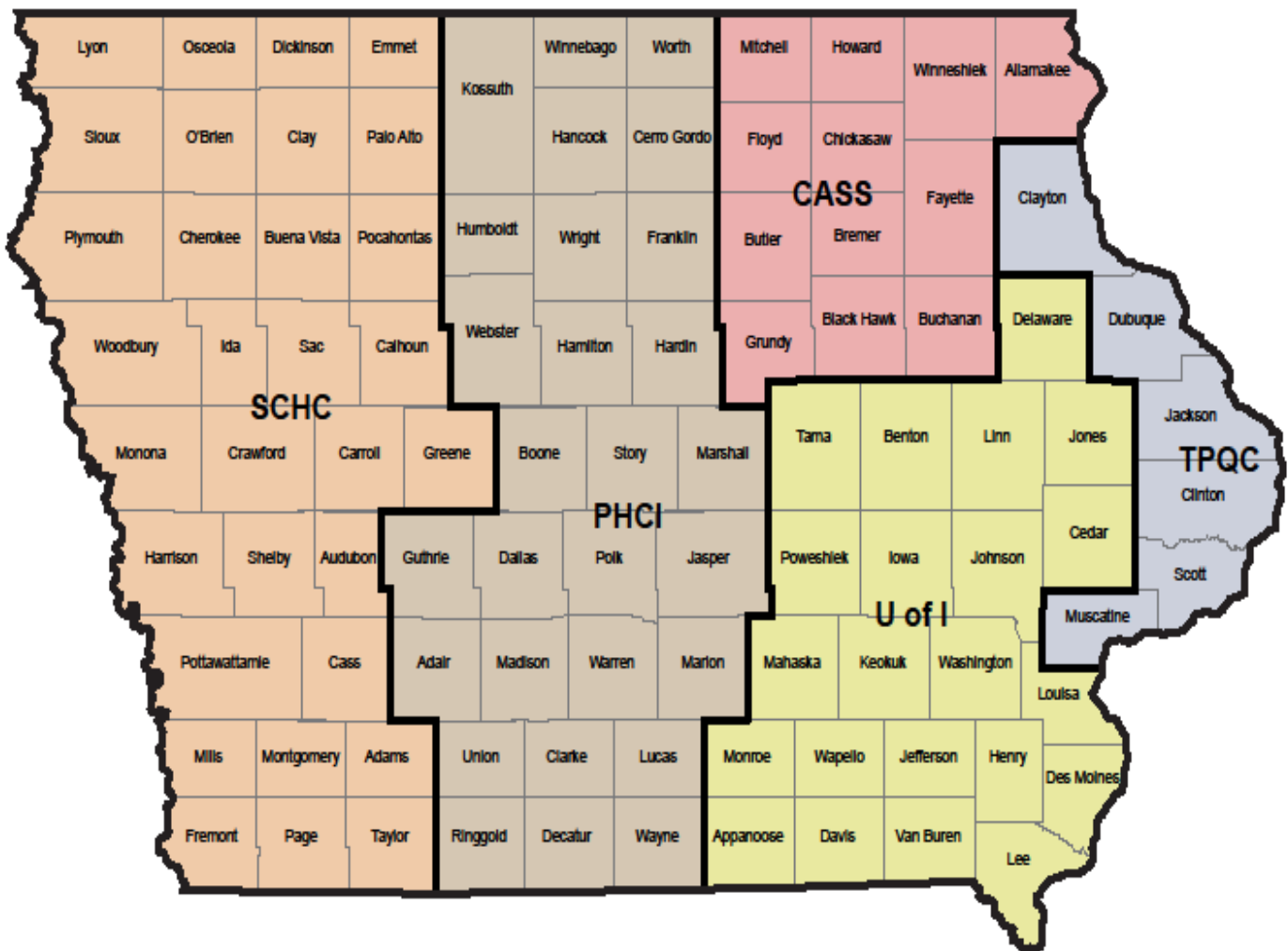


HOPWA



Having trouble maintaining your housing due to an emergent situation such as job loss or illness? You may be eligible for HOPWA assistance. Please contact the HOPWA provider in your area to see if assistance is available. UIHC currently offers assistance with long-term rental assistance (TBRA), short-term rent, mortgage, and utility assistance (STRMU), and permanent housing placement services (PHP) (deposit and/ or 1st months rent). If you live in the U of I area, contact Jennifer at 319-467-5662.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA)



Stouland Community Health Center (SCHC)
1021 Nebraska Street
PO Box 5410
Sioux City, IA 51102
(712) 252-2477

Primary Health Care, Inc. (PHCI)
1200 University Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50314
(515) 248-1517

Cedar AIDS Support System (CASS)
2101 Kimball Avenue
Suite 2880
Waterloo, IA 50704-2880
(319) 727-2002

University of Iowa (U of I)
200 Hawkins Drive
Iowa City, IA 52242
(319) 467-5662

The Project of the Quad Cities (TPQC)
1701 River Drive #110
Moline, IL 61265
(309) 762-5433

Vote November 3

The US general election will be held on Tuesday, November 3. Offices represented in this election include US President, US House, US Senator, and various state and local offices. We encourage all eligible to do their research and make their voices heard!

- ◆ US citizens over age 18 on November 3 are eligible to vote. Iowa has recently changed its laws to allow those with past felony convictions to vote, with the exception of certain homicide and other serious crime convictions. Those with past felonies must have completed probation or parole to be eligible to vote. Contact the Iowa DOC at (515) 725-5701 if you have questions about whether your sentence is complete.
- ◆ Iowa's voter registration deadline for this election is October 24, 2020. This is also the last day to request an absentee ballot. **If you have not registered by this deadline, you may still vote!** Iowa allows same-day registration at the polls. You must locate your polling place (<https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterreg/pollingplace/search.aspx>) and bring identification and proof of residency with you.
- ◆ Many communities offer early voting for registered voters. In Iowa City and some other communities, they are even offering drive-through voting! Contact your county auditor's office for more information.
- ◆ Iowa now requires identification to vote. Acceptable identification includes driver's licenses, non-driver ID's, student ID's, workplace ID's, and more. See <https://sos.iowa.gov/elections/voterinformation/edr.html> for more information.
- ◆ If you have questions about your eligibility to vote, how to register, or where to go to vote, please don't hesitate to contact a member of our social work team.

CONTACT US

- To schedule a clinic appointment at UIHC, call **319-356-8133** and for Cedar Falls Outreach, call **319-356-8133**.
- For lab results or health related questions, please call Amber Phelps, MA at **319-335-7218**.
- For refill requests, have your pharmacy fax a request to **319-356-3004** or contact the Infectious Disease refill line at **319-356-8133**.
- For insurance questions, contact Angela Speers at **319-335-7309** or **319-333-8714**.
- If you have a medical emergency during the 8am-5pm work day, please try contacting Amber or your provider. If Amber and your provider are unavailable, you may call the hospital operator at **319-356-1616** and ask for the Infectious Disease doctor on call.
- For medication questions, contact Dena Dillon at **319-541-0335**.
- Sub-contracted Ryan White case management services now offered at Great River Medical Center in W. Burlington at **1-319-800-5430**, and River Hills Community Health Center in Ottumwa at **1-319-800-5561**.
- Social work questions and concerns should be directed to:
 - Malory Dreasler** at **319-356-1545** or **319-359-9181** **Katie Vodraska** at **319-353-7173** or **319-383-6563**
 - Jennifer Keeler** at **319-467-5662** or **319-499-7963** **Tricia Kroll** at **319-384-7307**
 - Kari Vrbanc** at **319-467-5655** or **319-471-2123**

If you have questions or would like more information about our HIV program please contact **Amber Phelps** at **319-335-7218**.