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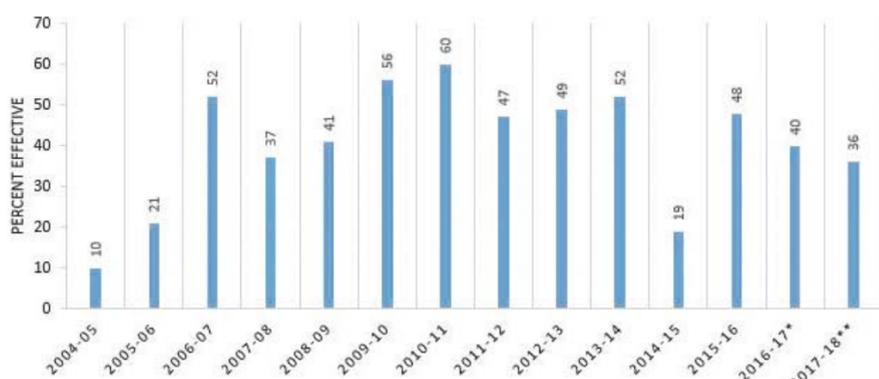
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Local urgent care besieged by flu cases

By John T. Miller

SEASONAL FLU VACCINE EFFECTIVENESS



This graph from the CDC represents the effectiveness of seasonal flu vaccines from the 2004-05 season through 2016-17. The numbers presented for the 2015-16 season were CDC estimates from Nov. 2, 2015 through April 15, 2016, while the numbers presented for the 2016-17 season are from a draft of a manuscript in progress. Interim early estimates for 2017-18 may differ from final end-of-season estimates. Image provided

In this particularly drastic flu season, even the staff at a local urgent care center isn't immune to the inconvenience. When another doctor at Stat Med called in sick via text message at 3 a.m. on a Saturday, Dr. Armando Samaniego had to scramble for coverage at his three sites.

Samaniego, a Lafayette resident and founder of Stat Med in Lafayette, says, "The incidence and prevalence of the flu has been much, much higher this year. We are seeing at least three to six positive readings at each of our clinics every day for the flu."

He cites two main reasons for the increase in cases: "This particular flu is much more aggressive, and the vaccine may not be as responsive as last year's."

Even though the vaccine does not totally ensure that you won't catch the flu (see graph), a 2013 study published in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases* found that people who got the flu shot were less likely to be hospitalized. Effectiveness is also dependent on age, with a 2013 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention finding that people over 65 who got the vaccine were just as likely to visit the hospital for flu symptoms as those who did not get the vaccine.

Samaniego also cites studies finding that symptoms are far less severe for people who have the flu

shot and yet still contract the disease.

The weather contributes to the spread of the virus, which explains why the flu season corresponds to winter. "When it is cold or wet, people tend to gather inside and huddle in the same rooms, increasing the chances to spread the germs," said Samaniego. "Once the weather warms up and people can go outside, the chance for it to spread is reduced."

Another factor causing the rapid transmission of the flu is the incubation period. After coming in contact with the virus, it may be at least 24 hours before symptoms begin to show. Even though unaware of the infection, a person is already contagious to others.

After the incubation period, flu symptoms may appear as a fever, or feverish chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, and fatigue. Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though that is more common in children.

Asked when someone should go to the doctor, Samaniego replied, "You should come in as soon as you have classic muscle aches and fever chills. Treating the sickness with Tamiflu [a prescription medicine], will help suppress the symptoms and speed up recovery."

The flu can often progress to something more serious, especially

if there are any predisposing conditions, such as diabetes, asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD, sometimes called emphysema), heart conditions, or in the very young or elderly, according to Samaniego. "We're seeing a lot of pneumonia, plus other types of infections, especially in the sinus and ear areas." In the young and healthy, the flu symptoms will typically last between a few days and a couple of weeks.

The CDC warns of other, more serious complications on its website, further indicating a need for a hospital visit and a doctor's care.

Samaniego graduated from the Harvard School of Medicine and settled in Lafayette to practice emergency medicine 25 years ago. He received his HealthCare Executive MBA and launched his own small business, Stat Med Urgent Care, first in Lafayette four years ago and now in Pleasant Hill and Livermore.

"I started Stat Med Urgent Care with ER doctors to provide greater care outside of a crowded ER at an affordable price," says Samaniego.

He is also active in the community, having volunteered as a team physician for Campolindo High School, where his three sons went to school, and as a premed advisor at Saint Mary's College, as well as team doctor for the Gaels rugby team.

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POETRY

LAUGHTER
by James A. Garvey
(submitted by resident Ursula Garvey)

Laughter is a sound failing on the ear, stirring joy to leap, unbound and keep hope recurring.

Laughter is a flower, dancing to the eye, inviting thought to move with color and prove love's sighting.

Laughter is a song, ringing in the air, beseeching moods to shift along and sift joy's teaching.

Laughter is a place, gentle in its power, proffering refuge from the dark a trace to mark life's offering.

Wilder Development Agreement ... continued from page A7

"People want sidewalks," she concluded.

There was some disagreement about whether or not all of the residents on Frog's Leap Way agreed that they wanted the nonconforming sidewalk removed but no replacement provided, and Council Member Dean Orr wanted that to be clarified. Otherwise, Orr was completely satisfied that sidewalks could safely be eliminated, citing the low level of traffic expected on the residential streets. Darlene Gee agreed that it isn't a large safety hazard and viewed the solution as reasonable. She also said that she could see how residents might feel that things had been misrepresented, but that, she said, was between the homeowners and the developer.

The matter was placed on the consent calendar for March 20. Residents gathered outside after the meeting were told by the mayor that if they object to the matter on the consent calendar, it will be pulled for further discussion, according to Ben Zarrin, a real estate agent and developer and a resident of Wilder, who was contacted by the Lamorinda Weekly after the

meeting. Wilder residents have been meeting to see how they can best advance their desire to have sidewalks in the entire Wilder area, which they believe are an important safety factor for the neighborhood. Residents hope that with more time they can negotiate a solution with the developer that will be a win-win: sidewalks that the community wants and a way to reduce the financial impact on the developer.

In its report to the city council, staff said that residents have expressed that streets are particularly unsafe at night, because the private streets in Wilder do not have any streetlights. Nevertheless, staff concluded that the elimination of sidewalks in parts of Wilder will not constitute a safety hazard.

Shuttles
Less contentious amendments included removing the requirement for school shuttles, leaving that issue up to the residents' homeowners association, and removing the requirement that BART shuttles also stop at school bus stops. The council also agreed to extend the level of the BART shuttle until the level of homes ready for occupancy

reaches 200, rather than the existing requirement of 100. The planning commission recommended keeping the school shuttle requirement.

Art & Garden Center, playfields

The eighth development agreement sets revised opening dates for the Art & Garden Center and playfields 4 and 5 to June 1, a year after the previously set opening dates. The reasons for the delay were listed as significant rain coupled with low temperatures, a significant amount of rock that delayed site grading, and the requirement of a new fire hydrant, among others. The DA also corrects the previous amendment that had stated that playfield 4 would have lighting; in fact, it won't.

Accessory Dwelling Units

Provisions for accessory dwelling units will be updated to conform to changes in state law and applicable city code changes made in response. State law changes were made last year to encourage the provision of additional housing, given the scarcity of housing units available.

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