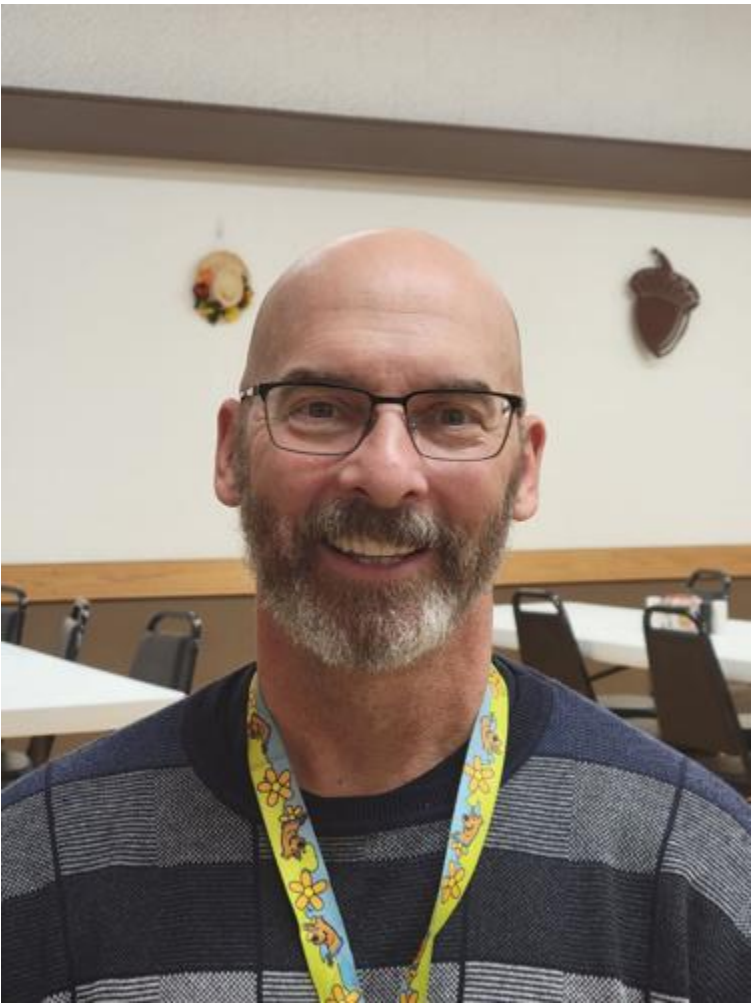


https://www.sidneyherald.com/news/local_news/vaccinations-save-lives-an-interview-with-sidney-health-center-s-pharmacy-director-steven-case/article_da104b62-6f80-11ee-a994-57f4403e1331.html

FEATURED

Vaccinations save lives: An interview with Sidney Health Center’s Pharmacy Director Steven Case

By Greg Hitchcock | The Sidney Herald
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Steven Case
Greg Hitchcock

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Flu season is near.

In the United States, flu season usually occurs in the fall and winter. While influenza viruses spread year-round, most of the time flu activity peaks between December and February, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The overall health impact (e.g., infections, hospitalizations, and deaths) of flu varies from season to season.

Sidney Herald editor Greg Hitchcock talks with Steven Case, the Pharmacy Director at Sidney Health Center, about the importance of getting vaccinated.

SH: What is expected this season for the flu?

Case: It is predicted to be a rough flu season. Because of some of the isolation during covid, a lot of people haven't been exposed to it as much as they were historically.

SH: What is the importance of having vaccinations?

Case: Vaccines are the biggest milestones in medicine. Can you imagine if we still had smallpox? There are tens of thousands of deaths due to the flu that is largely preventable.

SH: Is it primarily affecting children and the elderly?

Case: Most of the fatalities are those people who have underlying conditions. They are either very young or old and their immune systems are not fully functioning yet. They are more vulnerable to flu and to covid. It is important for herd immunity for people who are strong to take on the responsibility to protect everyone else. Making sure we are all vaccinated so if a healthy person is exposed they won't carry it and give it to others. Our bodies are then ready and can fight it off. Everyone in society should be more proactive in taking care of each other.

SH: What is the cost effectiveness of vaccinations?

Case: A flu shot even to the cost of the medical facility is very cheap, about \$20 or less for a flu shot. It is almost exclusively insurance covered for people 65 and older. If you are talking about the bang for your buck on healthcare, I can't think of anything else that is more bang for your buck than a vaccine.

SH: We are post-pandemic. Is that taking a factor in the flu?

Case: When we were isolating, we were wearing masks. The flu numbers plummeted. There was almost no flu that year. They were testing too. Those measures do work, however controversial. You wash your hands and you socially distance, it works.

SH: More people are working remotely. Is that going to reduce the number of people with the flu?

Case: People staying home and working, if that were feasible, it would speak for itself. There would be less social exposure. The large companies are bringing people back into the workplace. People are being drawn into the workplace regularly.

SH: Do you recommend people getting the covid and flu shot?

Case: When you have a captive audience, we want to get you caught up with everything. I recommend people get pneumonia shots who are eligible for it. And get their tetanus shots.

SH: We have a smaller community than other parts of the country. Does population density play a role in getting infected with covid or the flu?

Case: You probably have a better chance at picking something up in New York City than you do in Sidney. The danger is that when pods of areas don't get vaccinated, all it takes is someone driving through. They stop at a restaurant, or a gas station, they can start a forest fire. If you look at how influenza is transmitted, if one person can infect another, at the end of the month

that one person would have infected 31 people. If one person can infect two people, the numbers grow exponentially and at the end of the same month you would have infected over two billion people.

SH: Are there any myths about flu vaccinations?

Case: I would like to have a heart to heart to discuss the misnomers people have, things that are not true. Autism that people claim we can get from vaccines, how damaging that is and how untrue.

An attorney was trying to find a problem he could make money off of. To this day, people still think you get autism through vaccines even knowing that the whole thing was a scam. When they started with smallpox vaccines, people would get inoculated and live. People still fought against it.

SH: With the rise in social media, is there more skepticism about healthcare in general?

Case: People are skeptical about everything coming down the pike. Before the pandemic and before the political system got overheated, I think that there was trust. I think it would be hard to find anyone who didn't trust a medical provider then. Now, the way the world is, people are very skeptical. Because it is so easy to spread rumors over social media, those things really catch fire. It makes it harder for me to reverse this.

SH: Is Sidney Health Center equipped to handle the flu?

Case: We have a highly collaborative team that is absolutely ready. We have an up-to-date emergency room. For an area like this the health center is absolutely amazing.

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