

**NEWS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **It's not too late to vaccinate against flu**

### **Local family to host yoga fundraiser to help residents pay for vaccinations**

**(Lawrence, KS)** – With flu activity increasing and family and friends gathering for the holidays, the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department urges residents to receive an annual flu vaccination to protect themselves and their loved ones.

National Influenza Vaccination Week, Dec. 7-13, serves as a reminder that all of us have a responsibility to prevent the spread of influenza, or the flu, and that it's not too late to get a vaccination.

“Getting a vaccination is still the best way to prevent the flu,” said Clinic Supervisor Kathy Colson of the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department. “Flu season is here and before it becomes widespread, take the opportunity to get vaccinated.”

In the U.S., flu activity usually begins in October. There are two different types of influenza viruses currently circulating in Kansas, and, based on data from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, flu activity is currently minimal within Kansas. However, flu activity usually increases at this time of year, peaks in January or February, and can last as late as May.

On average, five to 20 percent of the U.S. population contracts the flu yearly, and more than 200,000 people are hospitalized with complications of flu. Influenza or pneumonia contributed to or was the direct cause of 1,135 deaths among Kansas residents during the 2013-2014 influenza season.

Lawrence resident Rachael Marie Sheridan died Feb. 24, 2014, due to complications from flu at age 39. Sheridan's family said she typically got a flu vaccine, but last year was an exception. “Not for a second, did I think a healthy 39-year-old woman would die from flu,” said her sister Elisabeth Sheridan, of Lawrence. “We are big proponents of flu vaccination, especially after seeing firsthand the toll it took not only on my sister, but others who were hospitalized with flu at the same time my sister was in the hospital.”

The Sheridan family is hosting a yoga session from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. Dec. 15 at the Community Health Facility, 200 Maine St., in honor of Rachael Sheridan. The family is asking for a \$10 donation and all of the money will be donated to the

Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department to help low-income Douglas County residents pay for flu vaccinations. The class is for anyone, including residents who don't have yoga experience. No registration is required. At the Health Department, flu shots cost \$25 for children ages 6 months to 35 months and \$30 for those 3 years and older.

"Please join Rachael's family and friends for an hour of yoga to honor her and to help raise funds for those to can't pay for their flu vaccination," Elisabeth Sheridan said.

### **About the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department**

The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department has served the Lawrence and Douglas County community for more than 120 years. Its mission is to advance policies, practices and programs that promote health for all, prevent disease and protect the environment.

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