

In 2015, OSF HealthCare Saint Luke Medical Center began a free flu immunization program at the seven schools in Kewanee, where school officials struggle to ensure students have basic necessities.

Nearly 18% of Kewanee residents live in poverty and 79% of children in the school district are enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program. The hospital identified the need for free flu vaccination during the school day through its Community Needs Assessment.

The program prevents the spread of influenza, lowers the cost to care for those who catch it and decreases student absenteeism. Since 2015, school nurses have administered 5,367 flu immunizations—a significant step toward removing barriers to care for many families.

At the beginning of the school year, consent forms are sent home with students for their parent or guardian to complete and return. Flu immunization clinic dates are then scheduled for each school. Plans for the 2020-2021 school year are still being discussed.

This program is funded in part through philanthropic work of the OSF HealthCare Foundation.

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