

Foster City Fire Department Administers Flu Shots with Help of CERTs October 5, 2009

As an annual preventative program, the San Mateo County Health Department supplies the County with materials to run free flu clinics to serve public service employees, first responders and their families. With the help of local CERT volunteers, the Foster City Fire Department administered the Flu Vaccine to over 700 San Mateo County community residents over the course of two days.

With a population of approximately 700,000 along the peninsula, the flu clinic could not have been executed as smoothly as it had without the help of CERT volunteers. Nearly 40 CERT volunteers rotated between shifts on September 30th and October 1st at the Foster City Fire Department Emergency Operation Center. These volunteers assisted in checking flu shot candidates in and the preliminary screening process, providing them with important information regarding the flu shot and explained procedures.

These CERT volunteers offer their time to make large scale operations like flu clinics possible. When asked why she was dedicated to being a CERT volunteer, one mentioned, "As CERT volunteers, we have a passion to help the community in case of emergencies, and the flu clinic is a perfect opportunity to take preventative action to keep people safe from getting sick and having it spread."

The incentive for a safer and healthier community is what motivates many of the CERT volunteers to spend numerous hours annually, partaking in various city and county programs, community events, training, extended education, and skills days.

Over the last year, there has been an increased awareness about the flu vaccine and its benefits. Although the flu vaccine does not prevent the flu 100%, it does provide protection against being severely infected. In this year's collaborative effort, San Mateo, Foster City, Millbrae and Central County worked together to ensure that the maximum number of residents would be immunized against the flu in their communities.

This partnering of CERT volunteers from neighboring cities exemplifies the effectiveness of the CERTs working together. As one CERT volunteer mentioned, "It is great because many different cities in close proximity are working together on this project. In case of an emergency or disaster we would also be partnering with neighboring cities, helping each other out. So during non-emergency projects like the flu clinic, it is nice to get familiar with each other."

Shots at the clinic were administered by Public Health Nurses who work for San Mateo County. Although each of the nurses work for different local organizations, the flu shot clinics serve as a community service opportunity for them to give back.