By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Flu season is a hot topic these days, and with that in mind, a three-hour flu clinic is planned in Imperial this Saturday, Oct. 3.

Saturday's clinic, from 7 to 10 a.m. at the Chase County Fairgrounds, will vaccinate for the seasonal flu only.

The flu clinic will also serve as a drill for emergency medical workers as they practice for a mass immunization effort if that ever becomes necessary, said flu clinic coordinators Lori Mendenhall and Lee Kunnemann of the Chase County Community Hospital and Clinic.

"The whole idea is to get a lot of people in and run them through in a short time," Kunnemann noted.

That gives the emergency workers the opportunity to practice for a mass shot clinic, if it's ever necessary due to bioterrorism. Imperial is one of the few communities in the area that does that.

The seasonal flu shot is approved for use in people older than six months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.

Medical staff from Chase County Community Hospital and Clinic will be set up inside the 4-H building to administer the shots.

People who are non-ambulatory can take advantage of the "drive-through" service Saturday. Sheriff's department officers will direct those individuals to the medical staff outside on the east side of the 4-H building, who will give the shot as they remain in their vehicles.

Those planning to use the "drive-through" option should enter the fairgrounds from the south, off East 5th Street by the Jaycee Hall.

Others walking into the 4-H building for their shots can park on the south grassy area by the Lions bingo stand.

Cost for the flu shot will be \$25, cash or check, and must be paid that day. Insurance will not be filed by the hospital/clinic for these shots.

Individuals on medicare will receive the shot free of charge as long as they bring their medicare number with them that day, Kunnemann said.

Groups making Saturday's third annual flu shot clinic possible include the hospital and clinic, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Dept., Chase County Emergency Management, Chase County Sheriff's Dept., Imperial Volunteer Fire Dept., Imperial EMS, Chase County Transit and the hospital auxiliary.

The county is providing the fairground facilities free of charge.

The local medical community does not yet know when the vaccine for the H1N1 flu will be available here. Receiving the seasonal flu shot will not conflict with the H1N1 vaccine.

The H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine. It is intended to be used alongside the seasonal flu vaccine to further protect people, according to health officials. Transportation available

Chase County Transit will provide transportation to the clinic Saturday for residents in both Imperial and Wauneta.

For information on the transportation services, contact the Chase County Clinic at 308-882-7299.

Kids' immunizations, flu shots

available this Saturday, too

The monthly immunization clinic for youths six months through age 18 will also be held this Saturday, in addition to a special time for kids' flu shots, according to immunization clinic coordinator Chris Tomky, R.N.

Regular immunizations will be given at Chase County Clinic on West 12th Street from 9:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Appointments must be made by calling 308-882-7256.

Flu shots for youths six months through age 18 will be given starting at 2:15 p.m. Saturday, also at the clinic building. No appointments are necessary for the kids' flu shots.

There is no charge for the kids' immunizations or the flu shot for them, Tomky said, but parents must be with the child and have their immunization records. Free will donations can be made.