

LOCAL

Free Oxnard flu shot event takes aim at the uninsured

Tom Kisken

Ventura County Star
USA TODAY NETWORK

During a COVID-19 pandemic that has doctors urging people to protect themselves from the flu, farmworkers, home caregivers and others bared their arms on an October Tuesday outside an Oxnard free clinic.

Along with free flu shots, people took home food and clothes from an evening event outside the weekly Westminster Free Clinic at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. The annual vaccination event is offered partly as a way to protect clinic patients being treated for diabetes and other chronic conditions that can put them at higher risk of influenza complications.

Health care professionals say flu vaccines are vitally important this year because of the similarities between flu symptoms and signs of COVID-19. They worry too about people becoming infected with both viruses at once.

Flu vaccines are available at many medical offices and pharmacies. Free flu clinics are also being held across the region. For a list of clinics, go to <https://bit.ly/374Q822>.

Westminster Free Clinic, a longtime presence in the Conejo Valley, expanded to Oxnard in February after receiving grant from the County of Ventura. Like the Westminster clinic in Thousand Oaks, it's aimed at uninsured people and has remained open throughout the pandemic with waiting rooms outdoors and COVID protocols in place.

The Oxnard clinic operates Tuesdays from 4:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. at 1800 South C Street. The Thousand Oaks clinic operates Wednesdays from 4:30 p.m. to 10



Nursing student Amara Velador gives a flu shot Oct. 13 to Alma Ramirez, as her husband Sebastian Solis, daughter Gladys Solis, 5, and son William Solis, 10, watch outside the Westminster Free Clinic in Oxnard. Free vaccinations and free food were distributed at the special event. PHOTOS BY JUAN CARLO/THE STAR

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p.m. at 1000 E. Janss Road. For information, go to <http://westminsterclinic.org/>.

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The Westminster Free Clinic in Oxnard offered free flu shots and food in a special event Oct. 13.

Port Hueneme chief puts his locks on the line

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Port Hueneme's police chief is possessed of both good humor and a fine head of hair.

Now, the former has put the latter at risk — but for good cause.

When Chief Andrew Salinas learned his officers were aiming to raise several thousand dollars for Breast Cancer Awareness month, he upped the ante. If the department raises \$7,000 by Oct. 31, the highest donor will get to shave the chief's head.

The offer grew out of a bit of jesting and boasting around the station, Salinas said.

Last year, the Port Hueneme Police Department sold pink uniform patches to the public and raised about \$1,000. All proceeds go to the American Cancer Society.

"This year, the officers wanted to take it to the next level," he said. They set a \$3,000 goal, thinking if they shaved an officer's head they could bring in more revenue.

Then the jokes started: They could probably get \$5,000 if they shaved the chief's head, the officers suggested.

"You really want me to cut off this nice black mane of mine?" Salinas joked back.

The chief is not bashful about the state of his pate. "I do admire my hair," he said. "I have a full set of hair."

His confidence is tinged with friendly rivalry aimed at some local counterparts.

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