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## PRESS RELEASE

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## Positive flu tests reach season high

**Jan. 24, 2018** — Positive flu tests at John Peter Smith Hospital in January climbed to 510 on Wednesday, exceeding December's total and suggesting continued need for vigilance and preventive measures.

JPS monitors the number of positive flu tests as a trend indicator, but the number of flu patients is likely significantly higher. Given the prevalence of flu in the community, a flu test is not required to initiate treatment in the emergency room (not all patients are tested). The number also does not include tests at JPS community clinics across Tarrant County.

Jeffrey Tessier, MD, an infectious disease specialist at JPS, said the number of cases is probably twice as high as the number of positive tests, turning January's 510 into more than 1,000 cases.

As flu swept across North Texas in December, the number of patients testing positive for flu at JPS climbed to 408 in December, up from 73 the prior month.

National surveillance by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests flu season may have peaked, but it remains prevalent in the community. To protect yourself from the flu, keep your hands clean. In public places, avoid close contact with the coughs and sneezes of others (and cover your own with a sleeve.) Avoid touching your face, and stay home if you're sick. For those unvaccinated, it's not too late to get a flu shot.

Flu shots remain available at JPS Medical Home clinics. For those without insurance or who will be paying out-of-pocket, the cost is \$25. Walk-in shot clinics are 3 to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays. A list of clinic locations is at <http://www.jpshealthnet.org/sites/default/files/flushotclincs2017.pdf>

A special outpatient clinic for people with flu symptoms remains open at JPS for people who come to the hospital but don't require emergency care. Flu patients arriving at JPS are encouraged to go to the Family Health Center, on the fourth floor of the outpatient building at 1500 S. Main St. Flu clinic hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week.