



Norman Regional, NPS, Xenex team up to disinfect local schools

NORMAN — The flu has hit the country hard this year, and Oklahoma is no exception. As hospital visits and deaths mount, public concern about the spread of the virus has intensified.

Norman Public Schools has managed to avoid the worst of the flu season, health services coordinator Beth Roberson said, but any facility full of elementary and middle school students isn't immune to viral infections. That's why NPS partnered with Norman Regional Health System to disinfect five schools using germ-zapping robots from Xenex.

Norman Regional and Xenex staff began running the robots through Adams, Kennedy, Washington and Roosevelt elementary and Whittier Middle School on Monday and will continue through Friday. Other robots will be used in schools in Moore and Noble.

The Norman Regional Health Foundation supports the district's school nurse program, so the disinfection program was a natural extension of that partnership, Roberson said.

Norman Regional has four Xenex robots that its environmental services team uses to disinfect the HealthPlex and Porter locations, director of environmental services and patient transportation Clyde Brawner Sr. said.

"On a regular basis, these machines are used to disinfect patients rooms after the patient has been discharged, as well as hot spot areas, such as public restrooms," he said. "We try to use them every opportunity we have."

Brawner said utilizing the machines means the Norman Regional Health System has taken extra steps to minimize the likelihood of someone becoming infected while at the hospital.

The robots uses a pulsed xenon lamp to send out UV light to kill germs that cause dangerous infections, including the flu, MRSA and C. diff. Xenex, based in San Antonio, began commercially selling their robots in 2011, and now are in more than 400 health care facilities across the U.S. Xenex PR director Melinda Hart said using the machine only adds about 10 minutes of work per room to a hospital staff's cleaning time and it dramatically reduces infection rates.

"Studies show that even when the best environmental services team cleans a room, they only disinfect about 50 percent of the surfaces," Hart said. "There just isn't time to clean everything. Some of the most dangerous germs, like C. diff, can remain on surfaces for five months. This robot kills C. diff in five minutes."

The five Norman schools were selected based on the number of recent flu cases, Roberson said. "We appreciate Norman Regional Health System for their continued partnership and their commitment to proactively addressing student health," said Dr. Nick Migliorino, superintendent of Norman Public Schools. "This is just another example of how students in Norman Public Schools benefit from the robust support of our community."

Hart said as flu season rages on, Xenex employees are eager to do what they can to minimize infections.

“Anything we can do to help, we want to do,” she said. “We’re willing, able and ready to jump in and help out.”

Source: http://www.normantranscript.com/news/education/norman-regional-nps-xenex-team-up-to-disinfect-local-schools/article_e2bdcd67-d5d8-5ca2-9882-806429605fde.html

February 20th 2018