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H1N1 (SWINE FLU) UPDATE OKALOOSA COUNTY

OKALOOSA COUNTY, FL— The Okaloosa County Health Department has been notified of the county's second death due to the H1N1 (Swine Flu) in a 51-year-old female with underlying medical conditions. The Health Department Director, Dr. Karen Chapman, M.D. said, "We offer our condolences to this individual's family and friends. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. I hope that with the passage of time the edges of your sorrow will soften and ease your burden."

What is important to learn from any person's H1N1 influenza death is what YOU need to know to protect yourself and your family. This includes:

- Ways to prevent the spread of H1N1 and seasonal influenza
- The signs and symptoms of H1N1 influenza and what to do if you are sick
- Who needs H1N1 vaccination as soon as vaccine is available in the community

To prevent H1N1 influenza or seasonal influenza Dr. Chapman recommends:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to lessen the spread of respiratory illness
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or tissue -- then wash your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid close contact with people who are coughing or otherwise appear ill
- Stay at home if you are sick to avoid spreading the illness to others

The signs and symptoms of influenza include: fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and in the case of the H1N1 virus, diarrhea and vomiting. If you think your illness might be influenza, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care. Call your doctor and ask whether you need to be seen in the office, emergency department or whether you can manage at home.

Most healthy people with 2009 H1N1 influenza have mild illness and do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. While not a substitute for consulting with your doctor, the following web site helps adults evaluate their symptoms: www.flu.gov/evaluation.

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Some people are more likely to get flu complications, and they should talk to a health care provider at first sign of symptoms about whether they need to be examined. Medications to treat influenza must be given early to work the best. They are:

- Children younger than 5, but **especially** children younger than 2 years old
- Pregnant women
- People 65 and older
- Healthy people with fever and chest cough or congestion
- People who have:
 - Cancer
 - Blood disorders (including sickle cell disease)
 - Chronic lung disease (including asthma or COPD)
 - Diabetes
 - Heart disease
 - Kidney disorders
 - Liver disorders
 - Neurological disorders (including nervous system, brain or spinal cord)
 - Neuromuscular disorders (including muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis)
 - Weakened immune systems (including people with AIDS)

Emergency signs of a serious H1N1 infection include:

- In children:
 - fast or troubled breathing
 - bluish skin color
 - not drinking enough fluids
 - not waking up or interacting
 - being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
 - flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and a worse cough
 - fever with a rash
- In adults:
 - difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
 - sudden dizziness/confusion
 - severe/persistent vomiting
 - flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and a worse cough

If any of these emergency signs are noticed, people should seek medical attention immediately.

The priority groups to get H1N1 vaccine as it arrives in the community include:

- Pregnant women
- Caregivers of children less than 6 months of age
- All children and young adults age 6 months through 24 years
- Any person 25-64 years with a chronic medical condition that puts them at risk for flu complications
- Healthcare workers and emergency services personnel

Stay up-to-date on H1N1 vaccine availability in Okaloosa County by visiting www.HealthyOkaloosa.com, and click on *H1N1 Vaccination Clinics*. For additional information on H1N1 (Swine Flu,) visit www.HealthyOkaloosa.com, www.myflusafety.com, or call the H1N1 information line at 1-877-352-3581.

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