

Countywide Services Agency

Department of
Health and Human Services

Division of Public Health

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For Immediate Release

Sacramento County H1N1 Update

(Sacramento, CA) – The Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) today held a news conference updating the community on the H1N1 flu situation in the County.

Leadership Responsibility

The responsibility for leadership in the response to the public health danger H1N1 poses falls within Sacramento County's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). "The Division of Public Health conducts disease surveillance activities to know what the spread and impact of H1N1 is in our community," said Ann-Edwards Buckley, DHHS Director. "The Public Health Laboratory provides testing for H1N1. The Division monitors the availability of both seasonal and H1N1 vaccine, and will distribute antivirals and supplies such as N95 respirators if they are in short supply," Edwards-Buckley said.

Local Emergency Declaration Requested

Sacramento County Public Health today announced that it has declared a local emergency for H1N1 flu in Sacramento County and will be asking County Supervisors to ratify this proclamation tomorrow at their regularly scheduled meeting. Sacramento County Public Health Officer Glennah Trochet, M.D., says the declaration follows similar declarations made at the state and national levels. "If ratified by the Board at tomorrow's meeting, this local emergency declaration will allow flexibility to government, response and private health agencies to help us deal with the ongoing pandemic," Trochet said.

Disease Impact

Sacramento County identified its first cases of H1N1 influenza at the end of April, 2009. Since then, thousands of Sacramento residents have had H1N1 and recovered uneventfully. However, over 300 Sacramentans to date have been hospitalized as a result of H1N1 complications, and 14 have died from the disease. Though the symptoms of H1N1 flu are virtually indistinguishable from seasonal flu, the virus is affecting different groups of people. With seasonal influenza 90 percent of those who have serious complications are over 65 years of age. With H1N1 over 75 percent of those with serious complications are under the age of 60. Please remember that 911 should be called only in case of a life threatening emergency. Help preserve this life saving resource by using it only if you believe that your life or that of another is in immediate danger.

H1N1 Vaccination Clinics

Residents are advised to first check with their regular healthcare provider to see if the H1N1 vaccine is available through them. The County will also be operating a series of more than 40 clinics that begin November 16th. The clinics will offer free vaccine. During the week of November 16-24 clinics will be targeted to priority groups. These include pregnant women, healthcare workers, people caring for infants under 6 months old, children and young adults aged 6 months to 24 years, and adults ages 24-64 with underlying medical conditions.

Protection from the Virus

The most effective way to protect against H1N1 influenza is getting the vaccine when it becomes available. Other things include staying home when you're sick and keeping children home when they are sick. Don't return to work or school until you feel better and have not had a fever for at least 24 hours. Frequent handwashing is advised, and if there is no soap and water, using hand sanitizers, can also kill the virus. You should cough or sneeze into a tissue, but if you do not have one handy, cough into your elbow, not your hand. This way you will not spread germs onto surfaces you may touch.

Information Resources

Public Health has an H1N1 information line that contains announcements at (916) 875-0600.

2-1-1 is also geared up to take calls about H1N1 flu. Just dial 2-1-1 from your phone.

More information on H1N1 flu is available on our web site at www.SCPH.com.

The national www.flu.gov web site is also a great place to get information.

And, you can follow Sacramento County Public Health's updates on Twitter at

www.Twitter.com/SacPublicHealth.

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