



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Health

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First Confirmed Flu-Related Deaths in San Bernardino County



San Bernardino County Department of Public Health has confirmation of its first two flu-related deaths. Both adults had underlying medical conditions and were from the High Desert area. One had been vaccinated. As of January 24, 2015, California Department of Public Health has confirmed a total of nine flu related deaths statewide.

“The families have our sincerest condolences. This fatality is a reminder that flu can be a serious and often deadly disease,” said Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare, Health Officer.

Flu activity is beginning to increase statewide, including reports of hospitalizations and severe disease, according to Dr. Ohikhuare.

“We are early on in what could be a severe flu season, as it has yet to peak in California. You can help prevent further spread of the flu by getting a flu shot,” Ohikhuare said.

The flu shot remains the most effective protection from the flu. A seasonal flu shot is recommended every year to all persons age 6 months and older, to help protect you, your family and the community from the flu.

The flu is caused by the influenza viruses and is easily spread from one person to another. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue. Those at highest risk of severe flu (the elderly, pregnant women, infants, or people with other health conditions) who show flu symptoms should contact their medical provider immediately in order to get the most effective treatment for flu.

In addition to getting the flu vaccine, prevent the spread of illness by following these steps:

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and properly dispose of used tissues
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after a cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers may be used if soap and water are not available
- Avoid close contact with sick people and stay home when you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others
- Contact your medical provider for treatment options

To find a flu shot clinic nearest you visit <http://flushot.healthmap.org>. For more information on flu activity please visit the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health website at www.sbcounty.gov/dph, or contact the Communicable Disease Section at 1-800-722-4794, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.