

News Release FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Coconino County Reports First Death Involving H1N1 (swine) Flu

According to Coconino County Health Department (CCHD) officials, an adolescent from Coconino County who died earlier this week has tested positive for the H1N1 (swine) flu virus. The young man, who had underlying health conditions, had been hospitalized in Flagstaff.

This is the first death in Coconino County of complications from the H1N1 virus. There have been a total of 10 confirmed cases of H1N1 (swine) flu in Coconino County and 729 state-wide. The Arizona Department of Health Services reports a total of 9 deaths associated with this illness.

The symptoms of H1N1 (swine) flu are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting in addition to the respiratory symptoms associated with swine flu. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

Health officials advise individuals who develop mild influenza-like-illness (ILI) (fever with either cough or sore throat) to stay at home, to get lots of rest and drink plenty of fluids. Persons who experience more serious symptoms and need to seek medical care should contact their health care providers to report illness (by telephone or other remote means) before seeking care at a clinic, physician's office, or hospital. **Those with severe symptoms (see below) who have difficulty breathing or shortness of breath or are believed to be severely ill should seek immediate medical attention.**

In children emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness

- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

To help reduce the risk of influenza and many other infectious diseases, health officials encourage the following:

- **Stay informed.** The Coconino County Health Department website will be updated regularly as information becomes available. www.coconino.az.gov/health
- Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. Some degree of spread occurs through contaminated hands. **Try to avoid close contact with sick people.**
- **Take everyday actions to stay healthy.**
 - **Sneeze or cough into your sleeve;** this is the preferred method of covering your cough. If you can't do this, cover your mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and wash your hands afterwards.
 - **Wash your hands often** with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
 - **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs spread that way.
 - **Don't share eating utensils, cups or straws.**
 - **Stay home if you get sick.** Stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- **If you get sick, stay home from work or school** and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are 27,717 probable and confirmed cases of H1N1 (swine) flu reported in the U.S., with at least 127 deaths. The CDC has indicated that this case count is an underestimate of the actual number of cases and estimates that there have been at least 1 million cases of pandemic H1N1 (swine) flu in the United States.

On June 11, 2009 the World Health Organization raised the worldwide pandemic alert level to Phase 6. A Phase 6 designation indicates that a global pandemic is underway.

WHO's decision to raise the pandemic alert level to Phase 6 is a reflection of the spread of the virus, not the severity of illness caused by the virus. It's uncertain at this time how serious or severe this novel H1N1 pandemic will be in terms of how many of those infected will develop serious complications or die from novel H1N1 infection.

Historically, pandemics have come in multiple waves with the second wave causing more illness. Because experience with this virus so far is limited and influenza is unpredictable, the Coconino County Health Department is encouraging citizens to make plans for the upcoming flu season.

The following prevention measures will help to lessen the impact on individuals, families and businesses in the event of a severe influenza season or other emergency situation:

- Prepare for a possible extended stay in your home - Store a supply of water and food.
- Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they got sick, or what will be needed to care for them in your home.
- Plan ahead and prepare for a possible school closure and plan for daycare if necessary.
- Businesses should consider how they will operate if several of their employee are out sick or out caring for sick family members.

Information about how to prepare is available at www.coconino.az.gov/health and at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/tab3.html>.

Call the CCHD Flu Information Line 928-679-7300 or visit www.coconino.az.gov/health for updated information.

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