



News Release

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, June 17, 2009
Media contact:
Tom Hudachko
Utah Department of Health
(o) 801-538-6232
(m) 801-560-4649
After-hours on call line:
801-209-2591

Utah's H1N1 Outbreak Continues to Spread

(Salt Lake City) – New data released today by the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) indicate the novel H1N1 influenza virus is continuing to spread throughout the state, with more Utahns seemingly becoming sick than residents in neighboring states.

“Uneven distribution of illness is actually very typical with both seasonal influenza and influenza pandemics, as they seem to hit different places at different times with varying severity,” said UDOH State Epidemiologist Dr. Robert Rolfs. “We are rarely able to fully explain these differences, other than to acknowledge that influenza viruses are inherently unpredictable,” he added.

As of today, UDOH is reporting 129 H1N1-associated hospitalizations (an increase of 39 since last week), and eight H1N1-associated deaths (an increase of two since yesterday). According to the Salt Lake Valley Health Department, one of the newly reported deaths is a female Salt Lake County resident between the ages of 25 and 50. The other newly reported death is a male Davis County resident, also between the ages of 25 and 50, according to the Davis County Health Department. Out of respect for patient confidentiality, no other information on either victim will be released.

Public health officials throughout the state continue to track the outbreak and are adjusting their response accordingly. Doctors should assume that most patients suffering from flu-like illness and who have no other medical condition to explain their symptoms, have the novel H1N1 influenza virus. Patients with appropriate symptoms and signs can be treated with antiviral medications without laboratory confirmation of the H1N1 virus; this is

- MORE -

Page 2 of 2: Utah's H1N1 Outbreak Continues to Spread

especially important for those with more serious symptoms or who are at risk for complications. Antiviral medications should also be strongly considered as prophylaxis for people who have been exposed to influenza if they are at risk of complications.

Pharmaceutical wholesalers report there is an adequate private supply of antivirals in the state. Some individual pharmacies may not have medication on-hand, so patients should call prior to visiting a pharmacy.

“We are working to make sure the medical community has the latest information on how to best treat the illness to help ensure patients do not become severely ill,” Rolfs said.

Most people who become sick will recover fully without complications and without needing medical attention. For people with a mild illness, the best course of action is to:

- Stay home if you become sick, keep your children home if they become sick, and try to limit your contact with others until you have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours.
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.

Those who are seriously ill, or who are at a higher risk for becoming seriously ill (such as those under age five, pregnant women, and people with chronic medical conditions), should call their doctor for advice.

This week, the World Health Organization reported 35,928 cases in 76 countries throughout the world. Nationwide, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 17,855 cases in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

For updated information on Novel H1N1 influenza visit www.health.utah.gov/h1n1.

*****Media Note: Dr. Robert Rolfs will be available for interviews at 2:30 p.m. at the Cannon Health Building - 288 North 1460 West in Salt Lake City.**

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