

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD

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Media contact: Chris Minnick
Office: 575-528-5197, Cell: 575-649-0754

Dept. of Health Announces Two Deaths in Children Related to H1N1 Influenza
Department Advises People to Get Vaccinated Against Seasonal Flu Soon

(Las Cruces) -- The New Mexico Department of Health announced today that a female infant from Roosevelt County and a 5-year-old female from Sandoval County died as a result of H1N1 influenza. Neither child had a chronic medical condition.

“Our sympathies go out to the families who are dealing with the loss of their children,” said Health Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD. “These tragic events should remind all New Mexicans that flu can be a serious and sometimes deadly disease.”

Dr. Vigil said influenza can cause serious complications and even death in people who are otherwise healthy, so it is important for everyone to follow the prevention guidelines to minimize the spread of the disease.

“Make an appointment today to get vaccinated against seasonal flu, and if you’re in a high risk group, get vaccinated against H1N1 when the vaccine is available,” Dr. Vigil said. “Everyone should wash their hands frequently and cover their mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing. Stay home and keep your kids home when they’re sick for 24 hours after the fever is gone.”

The Department of Health started shipping seasonal flu vaccine to public health offices, the Department’s long-term care facilities and private providers statewide this week. New Mexicans should contact their healthcare providers to receive flu vaccine. The Department’s public health offices provide seasonal flu vaccine to people who are at high risk for serious illness and people who have no health insurance.

The Department of Health expects to receive the first shipment of H1N1 vaccine in mid-October. The first group the Department of Health is advising to get vaccinated are pregnant women, household members/caretakers of infants less than 6 months old, children 6 to 59 months of age, children 5 to 18 years with certain chronic health conditions that increase their risk of complications, and healthcare workers and emergency medical service personnel with direct patient care.

The Department is advising the following high risk groups get vaccinated today against seasonal flu:

- Residents of long-term care facilities

- Persons ages 2-64 years with chronic health conditions, such as asthma or other breathing problems, kidney disease, heart disease, diabetes, muscle or nerve disorders that can lead to breathing or swallowing problems, and children on long-term aspirin therapy.
- Children age 6 months up to their 19th birthday
- Persons ages 50 years and older
- Pregnant women
- Healthcare workers who provide direct patient care
- Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children up to age 5, or anyone at increased risk of flu complications

So far this year, there have been seven deaths related to H1N1 influenza in the state. The other five deaths are as follows: a 45-year-old female from Sierra County with end stage liver disease, a 52-year-old female from Bernalillo County with chronic pulmonary disease, a 48-year-old female from McKinley County with asthma and diabetes, a 21-year-old female from Los Alamos County without chronic medical conditions, and a 58-year-old male from Bernalillo County with chronic conditions that put him at risk for serious complications from the flu.

For information about scheduled flu shot clinics, call Nurse Advice New Mexico toll-free at 866-681-5872 or go online to www.nmivc.org/cliniclist.php. Public health offices are listed in the phonebook's blue pages under state government. Contact information for public health offices is also listed at www.nmhealth.org.

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