

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD

For immediate release:  
Oct. 2, 2009

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**State Reminds Providers to Treat High Risk Patients with Antiviral Medications**  
*Department of Health also Confirms H1N1 Related Death in Chaves County*

(Las Cruces) -- The New Mexico Department of Health is reminding healthcare providers statewide that people with influenza-like illness who are at higher risk from serious complications should be treated with antiviral medications. The Department of Health also confirmed today that a 17-year-old female from Chaves County died on October 1 at University of New Mexico Hospital following a laboratory-confirmed H1N1 influenza infection. She did not have any known chronic health conditions.

“We express our deepest sympathies to the family who is dealing with the tragic loss of their daughter,” said Health Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD. “Influenza is a serious and sometimes deadly disease. For children who are less than two years old or have a chronic condition that puts them at higher risk and who are experiencing influenza like symptoms including fever, sore throat or cough, I am encouraging parents to call their child’s healthcare provider.”

Dr. Vigil also advises anyone who experiences a more severe illness that includes shortness of breath, rapid breathing, dehydration or decreased responsiveness to seek medical attention. People without a medical provider can call Nurse Advice New Mexico toll-free at 866-681-5872.

The Department of Health is recommending the following groups be treated with antiviral medications ideally within 48 hours after developing symptoms:

- Children younger than 2 years of age
- Adults 65 years of age and older, and
- Persons with the following conditions:
  - Chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, hematological (including sickle cell disease), neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus)
  - Immunosuppression, including that caused by medications or by HIV
  - Pregnant women
  - Persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
  - Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities

To prevent the spread of the flu everyone should wash their hands frequently and cover their mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing. Stay home if you are ill and keep your kids home when they’re sick until 24 hours after the fever is gone.

The Department of Health expects to receive the first shipment of H1N1 vaccine in October. The Department of Health recommends that the following groups receive H1N1 vaccination first: 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 from flu and healthcare workers and emergency medical service personnel with direct patient care.

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 is advising the following high risk groups get vaccinated 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 eight deaths related to H1N1 influenza in the state. The other seven 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, a 5-year-old female from Sandoval County with no chronic health conditions, and a female infant from Roosevelt with no chronic health conditions.

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](http://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](http://www.nmhealth.org).

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