



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

830 Scenic Drive, P.O. Box 3271, Modesto, CA 95353
Fax: (209) 558-8320
www.hsahealth.org

NUMBER: 14-01
FOR RELEASE: Immediate

DATE: January 3, 2014
CONTACT: Maria Blanco
PHONE: (209) 558-7116

The Flu is on the Rise in Stanislaus County, *Get a Flu Shot!*

Local health officials are reporting that influenza activity was on the rise in Stanislaus County and are reporting patients who are critically ill with influenza, including healthy young adults.

The California Department of Public Health reports that the H1N1 strain appears to be the predominant strain circulating so far in California and this is being seen in Stanislaus County as well. The H1N1 virus, which emerged during the 2009 pandemic, causes more illness in children and young adults, compared to older adults. It causes severe illness in all age groups, including those younger than 65 years of age. This year's influenza vaccine protects against the strains circulating in the state, including H1N1.

"The flu vaccine is an important and safe way to protect yourself and your loved ones against influenza" states Dr. John Walker, Stanislaus County Public Health Officer; "unlike other vaccine preventable diseases, a flu shot is needed every year to ensure protection."

People can still receive the flu vaccine to be protected this year. Typically, the flu season peaks in February and March in Stanislaus County and the flu vaccine only takes two weeks to become fully effective. It is particularly important for pregnant women and other people at higher risk for severe influenza to be vaccinated.

Check with your primary care provider or your local pharmacy for vaccine availability. Vaccinations are also offered at the Stanislaus County Public Health Department at a low cost of \$10 per child (6 months through 18 years) and \$25 per adult. Flu vaccines are provided to the public during the hours of 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and on Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Public Health building located at 820 Scenic Drive in Modesto. No appointments are necessary.

In addition to getting vaccinated, Public Health officials recommend everyone help prevent the spread of the seasonal flu by:

- Staying home when you are sick.
- Covering your coughs and sneezes with your elbows, sleeves, or with a tissue. Dispose of the tissue after each use. Coughing into hands can spread germs to others.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth, even after washing your hands.

For more information about the influenza virus, please visit the County web site at www.stanemergency.com or call the Health Services Agency Flu Hot Line at (209) 558-8872.

###