



## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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

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CONTACT: Jessica Montoya  
PHONE: (209) 558-6833

### Influenza Activity in Stanislaus County

**Stanislaus County** – Stanislaus County Health Services Agency officials are reporting the first influenza (flu) -associated death of a county resident less than 65 years old for the 2014-2015 flu season. The decedent, a 43 year old female, had underlying medical conditions, and died on February 8, 2015.

“We are grieved by the death of this county resident,” says Dr. John Walker, Public Health Officer. “The immunity conferred by the vaccine only lasts six months or so and that is the reason that annual vaccination is essential.”

Local Health officials are reporting that flu activity this season is increasing in Stanislaus County. Flu cases are widespread in California. Although each flu season is different, the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that an average of 24,000 influenza related deaths occur in the U.S. each year.

Public Health officials urge that everyone six months of age and older be immunized every year to protect them against flu, a serious illness which can lead to hospitalization or death. Check with your primary care provider or your local pharmacy for vaccine availability.

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

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Carry alcohol-based hand sanitizer with you and using when you are not able to wash your hands;
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth;
- Covering your coughs and sneezes with your sleeve or tissue; and
- Staying home if you are sick.

The CDC continues to emphasize the importance of prompt antiviral treatment for those who are severely ill and those who are at high risk of flu complications. Antiviral treatment, available only by prescription, should be considered for people at high-risk for severe influenza if they develop a flu-like illness, even before it has been confirmed to be influenza. In addition, persons with chronic medical disorders should also receive the pneumococcal vaccine. This is especially important for those with diabetes, respiratory disorders, and cardiac disease. The pneumococcal vaccine provides protection from the most common cause of pneumococcal deaths for 10 years or more.

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These important messages and Public Health hygiene measures can help you protect yourself as well as your family and neighbors from becoming sick.

For more information about the influenza virus and the flu vaccines, please visit [www.stanemergency.com](http://www.stanemergency.com) or call the Health Services Agency Flu Hotline at (209) 558-8872.

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