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FIRST INFLUENZA DEATH IN STANISLAUS COUNTY

MODESTO, CA (December 29, 2017) – A female in her 60’s, is the first influenza (flu) – associated death this flu season in people under 65 years of age in Stanislaus County. “This death is a sad reminder that flu can be deadly, especially for people at risk for severe disease” said Dr. Julie Vaishampayan, Stanislaus County Public Health Officer.

Every year, influenza spreads across the country, from person-to-person, among families and communities. The severity of flu illness can vary from mild to severe. Flu-related complications can lead to hospitalization and sometimes death.

The symptoms of influenza, which tend to come on suddenly, may include fever, chills, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting. People experiencing flu-like symptoms should call their health care provider if they have severe symptoms, trouble breathing, are pregnant, or have chronic health conditions such as lung or heart disease or diabetes.

With flu activity high in Stanislaus County, Public Health encourages residents to **“Take 3” actions to fight the flu:**

#1. Get the current seasonal influenza (flu) shot

- Everyone six months of age and older should get the flu shot as soon as possible. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly seasonal flu shot as the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal influenza viruses. Since it takes up to two weeks after vaccination for full immunity to take effect; anyone who has not already been vaccinated should do so NOW.
- Vaccination is especially important for young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease, and people 65 years and older who are at high risk of serious flu complications.
- Seasonal flu shot is also important for health care workers, child care workers and other people who live with, or care for, high risk people to help protect them from getting the flu.
- Flu shots are available at doctors' offices, retail pharmacies, and Public Health. Check with your healthcare provider to decide which form of the shot is the best option for you.

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#2. Take everyday preventive actions to stop germs

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may have germs on them.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine except to get medical care or for other necessities.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

#3. Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them

- If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can treat your illness.
- Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics. They are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) and are not available over-the-counter.
- Antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications, like pneumonia.

For more information about the influenza virus and the flu shots, please visit <http://www.stanemergency.org/diseases/coldsflu/> and <https://vaccinefinder.org>.

Resources for Additional Information on flu are:

- Stanislaus County Public Health flu website, <http://www.hsahealth.org/pages/flu.shtm>
- California Department of Public Health flu website, <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/Influenza.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>