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MEDIA NOTE: To safeguard patient privacy, the Sarasota County Health Department does not report on the clinical details of individual cases. All patient information reported to the Sarasota County Health Department is pursuant to Section 381.0031 F.S. and are considered confidential medical records that are exempt from the public records law.

Sixth H1N1 (swine) flu death confirmed in Sarasota County

The Sarasota County Health Department has received laboratory confirmation of a sixth H1N1 (swine) flu-related death in the county since the pandemic began. This death was a 67-year-old male with underlying medical conditions.

“Although flu activity in Sarasota County is less than expected for this time of year, H1N1 influenza is still present in our community,” said William Heymann, M.D., F.A.C.E.P., medical executive director for the Sarasota County Health Department. “It can be a serious and even fatal disease especially in young children, pregnant women and among those living with chronic health conditions. We extend our condolences to the family who suffered this loss.”

Everyone is urged to continue to take important actions to help reduce flu illness in the community.

- Get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine if you have not already been immunized. Residents getting the vaccine will be protected within about two weeks of vaccination. The health department offers free H1N1 flu vaccines on weekdays during established hours on a walk-in basis at their Sarasota and Venice clinics. Parents are reminded that children under age 10 need two doses of the vaccine given 28 days apart.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Wash hands for 20 seconds using soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective against the flu.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth before washing your hands. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with people who are coughing or otherwise appear ill.
- Stay home if you are sick and keep your children home from school or daycare if they are sick.
- Continue to stay healthy and informed. Call the Flu Information Line at 941-861-2800 for information about where to get an H1N1 flu vaccine, or visit www.sarasotahealth.org. This information is also available on touch-screen health kiosks at all eight libraries and Senior Friendship Centers throughout Sarasota County.