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NEWS RELEASE

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2009 H1N1 Influenza Infection Contributes to Death of a Bannock County Teen

The 2009 H1N1 pandemic flu virus has contributed to the death of a Bannock County teen. The adolescent, who had underlying risk factors, died from flu complications during the past week. This is the second Idaho death related to H1N1 infection, but the first in a person under the age of 25.

“Deaths in children and young adults are especially tragic,” says Dr. Christine Hahn, M.D., Idaho State Epidemiologist. “Our hearts go out to the family and community. The H1N1 virus has caused a concerning number of serious illnesses in young people, so it is important for all of us to do our part and stop the spread of flu infections.”

A total of 620 people in Idaho have lab confirmed infections from the 2009 H1N1 pandemic flu virus since April, with 283 of those reported since September 1. Idaho’s first H1N1-related death occurred in late September in a Canyon County man in his 50s who had an underlying medical condition.

The first shipments of vaccine for the H1N1 virus began arriving in the state this week. Although the initial supply is limited, larger quantities of vaccine are anticipated to be available for public vaccinations over the next two to three weeks. Children and young adults under the age of 25 are considered high risk and are among the groups for whom vaccine is recommended.

Because of the initial limited vaccine supply, parents of children with underlying medical conditions should be extra vigilant in monitoring their children for flu-like symptoms. This includes children with asthma, diabetes, cerebral palsy or other chronic neurodevelopmental conditions.

In the coming weeks as it becomes available, vaccine is recommended for people who are high-risk for 2009 H1N1 pandemic flu infection. This includes:

- Pregnant women,
- Children and young adults from 6 months through 24 years of age,
- Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age,
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel,
- Persons aged 25 through 64 who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.

(more)

Symptoms of H1N1 pandemic infection are similar to seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue, with some reports of diarrhea and vomiting. “Most children and adults with the flu who are generally in good health will recover without needing to visit a doctor or other health care provider,” Dr. Hahn says. “Children and adults who are ill and at high risk for flu complications, and people with more severe flu symptoms, should call their regular health care provider.” Dr. Hahn recommends that when possible, people should contact their health care provider to get advice on whether they need to be seen.

Detailed information about the 2009 H1N1 pandemic virus is available from:

- The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare’s website at www.panflu.idaho.gov.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s website at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/
- U.S Dept. of Health and Human Services website at www.flu.gov
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Hotline: 1-800-CDC-Info (1-800-232-4636).

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(Editors: For more information please contact DHW Public Information Officer Tom Shanahan, 208-334-0668 or your District Health Department Public Information Officer.)