



## MEDIA RELEASE

### UMATILLA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

200 SE Third, Pendleton, Oregon

#### Immediate Release

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### Public Health Officials Report Two Deaths Related To Influenza A: Suspected H1N1

Pendleton, Ore. – The Umatilla County public Health Department announced today that there have been two deaths related to influenza A, suspected H1N1 serotype (swine flu). The deaths involved a child and middle-aged adult, not related to one another but both had serious underlying health issues. As before, personal details about the case, including age, gender and specific jurisdiction of residence, will not be released to protect the privacy of the resident and the resident's family.

"We are saddened by these deaths," Genni Lehnert, Administrator, Umatilla County Public Health said. "Their deaths remind us that even though most of the H1N1 cases in Umatilla County and the state have been mild or moderate, all flu viruses can be deadly and everyone should remain vigilant in helping to prevent the spread of H1N1 and seasonal flu."

Although more than 1,300 deaths associated with H1N1 influenza have been reported nationwide, the severity of H1N1 influenza illness appears comparable to seasonal influenza, which is responsible for about 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Limited quantities of the H1N1 vaccine are available, with an increase in supply anticipated the 4<sup>th</sup> week of December and the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of January. The earliest shipments will be of the nasal spray vaccine, which can be taken by healthy individuals ages 2-49, with H1N1 flu shot vaccine following in larger quantities.

Umatilla County health department officials are urging residents to be patient and to understand that the H1N1 flu vaccine should first be given to those in the highest risk groups, which include:

- Those 6 months old through 24 years old,
- Pregnant women,
- Household contacts of those younger than 6 months old,
- Health-care and emergency service professionals, and
- Those 25 to 64 years old with chronic health disorders.

Health care providers interested in providing H1N1 vaccine should contact their local health department as soon as possible. Seasonal flu vaccine is already available in many locations, and health officials are encouraging individuals, including those over 65, not to delay receiving their annual flu shot.

The symptoms of both seasonal and H1N1 influenza include fever, chills, headache, sore throat, cough, body aches, and may include vomiting or diarrhea. Individuals at higher risk for complications—such as those with chronic health conditions or who are pregnant—should contact a health care provider early, in case treatment with antiviral medication is necessary.

There are some very important precautionary measures that residents can take to protect themselves and the people around them:

1. Protect yourself and others by washing your hands often;
2. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or shirt sleeve, not your hand, when coughing or sneezing and discard tissue immediately in a waste container.
3. If you are ill stay home and avoid exposing others to your illness. Do contact your doctor if you have any concerns.

Individuals can visit [www.flu.oregon.gov](http://www.flu.oregon.gov) for more information on H1N1 and Oregon, or the CDC website [www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu). Oregon's toll-free influenza hotline number is 1-800-978-3040, and operates from 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

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