



**HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY**

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## **First Influenza Death in Stanislaus County**

**Stanislaus County** - The Stanislaus County Health Services Agency Public Health Department has received a report of the first influenza related death in Stanislaus County. The deceased, a 28-year-old male with multiple pre-existing chronic medical disorders, succumbed to influenza January 31, 2013.

Flu seasons are unpredictable, and each season can vary in severity of illness. Influenza, or the flu, is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and death. Even healthy people can get very sick and pass the flu to others. "The seasonal flu vaccine is important and is a safe way to protect yourself and your loved ones against the seasonal flu. We are still early in the influenza season, and **IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO VACCINATE**. It is highly likely that our flu season will last into April," states Dr. John Walker, Stanislaus County Public Health Officer.

The seasonal flu vaccine is available for anyone six (6) months of age and older. Individuals covered by Medi-Cal, Health Plan of San Joaquin Managed Care, Health Net Managed Care, MIA, or straight Medicare Part B are not required to pay for the immunization. Individuals covered under a Medicare HMO plan (i.e. Kaiser, Secure Horizons, Health Net, Sutter Gould, etc.) should receive vaccinations from their health care provider. For those not covered by the insurance payers listed above or do not have any insurance, immunizations are available at the Health Services Agency Public Health Immunization Clinic. The cost is \$10.00 for any child age six (6) months to 18 years of age or \$25.00 for anyone aged 19 years and older. A patient's inability to pay will not be a barrier to a vaccination.

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

- Avoiding touching of the eyes, nose or mouth;
- Covering coughs and sneezes with sleeve or tissue;
- Washing hands often; carrying hand sanitizer and using it when unable to wash hands; and
- Staying home when sick.

This year the flu vaccine offers protection against three strains of flu: A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)-like, A/Victoria/361/2011 (H3N2)-like, and B/Wisconsin/1/2010-like antigens.

Additional seasonal flu information can be found at the HSA website at [www.hsahealth.org](http://www.hsahealth.org) or by calling the flu information line at (209) 558-8872.

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