

Department of Public Health announces 4th death due to novel H1N1 influenza

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Hartford – The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) today announced the state’s fourth death linked to infection with the novel H1N1 virus. The person, a Hartford County resident, was in the 40 – 49 year old age group and had underlying medical conditions that increased the risk for serious illness from influenza. The person died recently after hospitalization.

“Tragically, this person died due to illness associated with H1N1 influenza infection. I would like to extend our deepest sympathies to this person’s family and friends,” stated DPH Commissioner Dr. J. Robert Galvin. “While most cases we are seeing are mild, influenza is a serious illness that can unfortunately lead to death. We continue to monitor this novel H1N1 influenza, and continue to urge Connecticut residents to take simple, everyday precautions: cover your cough every time, wash your hands often and well, check yourself for flu symptoms, and stay home and away from others if you are sick.”

DPH officials said certain groups of people are at higher risk of complications from the flu. These groups include children under the age of 2, adults over the age of 65, pregnant women, and people with chronic conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, and heart disease. These people should call their health care provider immediately to discuss appropriate treatment if they develop a fever with a cough, sore throat, or runny nose.

The Department of Public Health reported 767 Connecticut residents have had laboratory-confirmed novel H1N1 influenza, of whom 28 have been hospitalized. Most of these hospitalized persons have recovered and been discharged. Residents from the following counties have been hospitalized: Fairfield (10), New Haven (14), and Hartford (4). Cities with three or more hospitalizations include the following: Bridgeport (3), Hartford (3), New Haven (6), Stamford (4), and Waterbury (5). These cities all have populations over 100,000 people.

“We continue to expect more illness from H1N1 influenza in Connecticut,” stated Dr. Galvin. “While most people may experience only mild illness, it appears that H1N1 flu is at least as severe as seasonal flu, and so it won’t be unexpected to see serious illness, including death.” Dr. Galvin noted that every year, approximately 36,000 people die due to seasonal influenza in the United States.

For a list of towns with confirmed cases, please visit www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch. Laboratory-confirmed cases represent only a fraction of the likely number of cases in the

state because many persons with mild symptoms do not seek care from a doctor or hospital but recover at home.

DPH continues to ask residents to take precautions to prevent getting the flu or spreading it by staying home from work or school if they are sick, washing their hands frequently, and coughing or sneezing into their sleeve or a tissue.

For more information on novel H1N1 flu:

- Connecticut Flu Watch: www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch/swineflu
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
- Call 211

The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at www.ct.gov/dph or call (860) 509-7270.

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