

News Release

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Influenza update for Sacramento County

14 deaths, 74 ICU patients

Sacramento County has confirmed that 14 residents have died due to influenza, and that 74 residents have been admitted to local Intensive Care Units (ICUs). Those who died include seven women and seven men, between the ages of 18 and 64. The cases are predominantly the Influenza A, H1N1 strain. Some who died had underlying conditions, such as diabetes, and cancer.

2013 saw a total of 16 flu-related deaths in Sacramento County. While the comparison of numbers may appear to provide perspective, the path of influenza is very dynamic, and, it is very difficult to project—during the season—the total number of people who will ultimately be affected by it.

Three strains of influenza are currently circulating in Sacramento County - H1N1 (which is a flu A strain), Influenza A and Influenza B. The good news is that the flu vaccine, which is still readily available, covers all three strains of the flu that have been detected.

Sacramento County Public Health Officer, Dr. Olivia Kasirye, encourages all, who can, to get vaccinated. “Do not let the weather fool you; we are still in the midst of the flu season, and we continue to encourage those who have not, to get immunized as soon as possible.”

The California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend annual influenza vaccinations for everyone six months of age and older, including pregnant women. A person’s decision to receive the vaccination or not impacts the entire community, as a yearly flu vaccine not only protects the individual from illness, but also those nearby. It’s especially important to be vaccinated if you have regular contact with people more vulnerable to the complications of flu, including babies, children with asthma, and the elderly.

The flu is a serious respiratory illness caused by a virus. The flu comes on suddenly and symptoms may include fever, headache, tiredness, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion, and body aches. Illness typically lasts two to seven days. Influenza may cause severe illness or even death in people such as the very young or very old, or those who have underlying health conditions.

In addition to getting vaccinated, it’s crucial to practice good health habits. If you become ill, you should take actions to stop the spread of germs, including:

- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- Wash your hands with soap/water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

People with chronic medical conditions or those experiencing worsening flu symptoms should seek medical attention.

If you need information about immunization services for children and adults, or need to refer clients or get information regarding upcoming influenza clinics, please contact the Sacramento County Immunization Assistance Program at 916-875-SHOT (7468), Monday-Friday between 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, or use the Flu Vaccine Finder at www.flu.gov/ or the HealthMap Flu Vaccine Finder located at <http://flushot.healthmap.org/>

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