



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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State confirms first H1N1 death in Washington

Snohomish County man dies from influenza A(H1N1) complications

SNOHOMISH COUNTY, Wash. – The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has confirmed the state’s first death related to swine-origin influenza (H1N1). The unnamed male was a Snohomish County resident who died Wednesday, May 6.

The man, in his thirties, had been suffering flu-like symptoms. Testing completed Saturday, May 9, by DOH has confirmed the link to H1N1, while an autopsy also shows the man suffered from underlying heart disease.

“This unfortunate death is consistent with the two other confirmed H1N1 deaths in Texas, where both suffered underlying health issues,” said Dr. Gary Goldbaum, health officer and director of the Snohomish Health District. “This death reminds us that influenza can be a very serious illness, especially if a person has underlying health problems.”

While Snohomish County remains prepared to handle future cases, residents should take appropriate precautions to prevent the spread of H1N1, said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon.

“First, our thoughts and prayers go out to the family of our Snohomish County resident,” Reardon said Saturday. “While most symptoms related to this virus are mild, people must not become complacent about an illness we’re still trying to understand.”

Snohomish County continues to collaborate with the state Department of Health, which is the lead investigator for this case.

Goldbaum reiterated Saturday that most cases of H1N1 do not require medical attention. Still, the number of cases in Washington state and Snohomish County are expected to continue increasing.

Flu symptoms often include fever, muscle aches, cough and sometimes trouble breathing. It’s important for people who are sick with flu-like symptoms to stay home and only go to a health care provider if they become seriously ill. The best thing people can do is to pay attention to their own health. If children are sick, keep them out of school or day care until they’re well.

Protecting public health and safety remains Snohomish County’s first priority. Keeping residents informed is part of that. There are multiple ways to stay updated on how this disease is affecting Snohomish County residents and steps they should be taking. Residents are encouraged to:

- Visit the Snohomish Health District’s Web site at www.snohd.org.
- Go to the county and health district’s Facebook page at tinyurl.com/ct4uj9 or by searching for Snohomish County DEM or Snohomish Health District.

- Sign up for Twitter updates at http://twitter.com/SnoCo_DEM.
- E-mail flu@snoco.org with questions.

Other useful resources include:

Washington State Department of Health Swine Flu (H1N1) Information, www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/default.htm.

Control of Pandemic Flu Virus on Environmental Surfaces in Homes and Public Places,
www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/individual/panfacts.html.

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