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IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH & WELFARE

North Idaho Woman Dies from a Flu-related Illness ***First State Flu Death for 2015-2016 Season***

A north Idaho woman over the age of 60 has died from an influenza-related illness. The Panhandle Health District resident is Idaho's first influenza-associated death of the season. Last flu season, 32 people were reported to have died from flu-related illnesses in Idaho.

“Our condolences go out to the family of the woman who died,” says Idaho Department of Health and Welfare State Epidemiologist Dr. Christine Hahn. “This underscores that influenza is in the community, and how important it is for all of us to take precautions to avoid influenza infections. In addition to washing your hands and staying home if you are sick, now is the time to visit your health care provider, local public health district, or pharmacy to locate and get vaccinated as soon as possible. Getting vaccinated today will help protect you and your family over the holidays.”

Everyone over six months of age is recommended to get the flu vaccine. This season's vaccine has been updated to match viruses that are circulating.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that infects 5 to 20 percent of the population every year. Symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and sometimes a cough and sore throat. Most people who get influenza recover after a few days, but some people may develop serious complications and even die. Every year, the flu contributes to an estimated 36,000 deaths in the United States, along with more than 200,000 hospitalizations.

People who are especially vulnerable to complications of the flu include:

- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older

- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, heart or lung diseases
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu.

In addition to getting vaccinated, people can protect themselves from the influenza virus and other respiratory illnesses by practicing good health hygiene habits. To avoid infection, you are urged to:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent infecting other people. Avoid people who appear sick.
- Stay home from work or school when sick,
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after being out in the public. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth until you have washed your hands.
- Get plenty of rest, drink plenty of liquids, eat nutritious foods and take part in physical activity to stay healthy.

For information about influenza and how to stay healthy, please visit www.cdc.gov/flu or <http://flu.idaho.gov>

(Editors: For more information about vaccination sites in your area, please contact your local public health district public information officer.)

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