



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

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DOH CONFIRMS FOURTH DEATH INVOLVING H1N1 FLU

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) has confirmed novel H1N1 influenza infection in an adult male who died on July 19 at a hospital on the Big Island. He was in his early 50's and had underlying medical conditions. The Hawai'i island resident is the fourth death in the state associated with the new flu strain, and one of over 300 reported nationwide over the past few months according to the CDC website. No further information about the patient's medical condition before death or identification will be released due to patient privacy considerations and federal law.

"The primary cause of death was influenza pneumonia, but the patient's underlying medical conditions were a contributing factor," said Dr. Sarah Park, chief of the Disease Outbreak Control Division and state epidemiologist. "The department currently is focusing its investigation and testing on critical cases and focused clusters as a way to monitor when this pandemic virus might change to something that causes more severe disease."

Recent data collected by the DOH suggests that influenza activity in Hawai'i has increased and is above the levels normally seen at this time of year. The most common influenza virus strains circulating in Hawai'i at this time are the novel influenza A (H1N1) and seasonal influenza A (H3N2).

The public is reminded to stay at home when you are sick and isolate yourself from others whenever possible.

(more)

“We are receiving reports about situations where people return to work while still ill and then put others at risk,” Dr. Park said. “It is so important for everyone to use good health hygiene to reduce the amount of illness in our community.”

As with any influenza, the public is reminded to take the following steps to prevent spreading illness to others:

- **Stay at home when you are sick;** isolate yourself from others whenever possible;
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and dispose of used tissues;
- Wash your hands frequently, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth;
- Seek care if you have influenza-like illness (fever > 100°F plus cough or sore throat); and
- Stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of water, and getting plenty of rest and exercise.

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