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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First H1N1 Influenza Death Confirmed in County

BREMERTON, WA — A Kitsap County male in his 50s died yesterday from H1N1 influenza (swine flu). This is the first reported H1N1 death of a Kitsap County resident.

"Our hearts go out to this man's loved ones," said Dr. Scott Lindquist, Director and Health Officer of the Kitsap County Health District. "We've seen flu activity increase over the past few weeks, and this tragedy reminds us that influenza can be a very serious illness."

In Kitsap County from September 19 to October 19, 2009, there have been five hospitalizations of patients with H1N1 influenza.

Initially, vaccine is being prioritized to protect people most at risk for H1N1 influenza, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and as modified by the Health District. Vaccine availability will be opened up to everyone who wants it as soon as supplies are sufficient to cover demand in risk groups. The priority groups include:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Children between the ages of 6 months and 4 years old
- Children and adults up to age 64 years with serious, chronic medical conditions (especially lung disease)
- Healthcare and emergency workers

Kitsap County received its first doses of the H1N1 vaccine last week. To date, 6,700 doses of H1N1 vaccine have arrived in Kitsap County with an additional shipment of 2,600 doses expected this week. The vaccine was initially prioritized to immunize health care workers on the front lines of the epidemic. Available vaccines are now prioritized for all at risk groups.

At this time, H1N1 vaccine is still being manufactured and is not yet widely available for the general public. The Health District is working with the Washington State Department of Health and CDC to assure shipments go out to Kitsap County immunization providers continuously as the vaccine is produced.

Based on the best information currently available from CDC, larger supplies of vaccine needed for broader-scale administration to the public will begin to arrive in Kitsap County in the coming weeks. Exact amounts of the vaccine and delivery dates are difficult to predict due to vaccine production delays.

Please visit www.kitsapcountyhealth.com/H1N1/h1n1.htm or call the Health District's Flu Hotline at (360) 337-5240 for updates about vaccine availability.

Persons with influenza do not need to see a doctor unless their symptoms are unusually severe or if they are at increased risk of severe illness due to an underlying health condition. Most people experience and recover from H1N1 flu without medication just as they do from seasonal flu. If your health care provider prescribes antiviral medication, it is most effective if started within 48 hours of the first symptoms of illness.

For additional information, please contact Scott Daniels, Public Information Officer, at (360) 337-5287 (office), or (360) 271-9230 (cell).

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