

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

District Confirms First Two Cases of Flu in Clark County This Season

Cases signal start of flu season, while overall influenza activity in Clark County remains low

(Las Vegas, Nev., - November 24, 2004) - The Clark County Health District Office of Epidemiology has identified the first cases of influenza this season in Clark County. Type A influenza has been confirmed in two patients by the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory. Other surveillance indicators have not revealed any significant flu activity in the county at this time. Sporadic flu activity was confirmed in Northern Nevada several weeks ago.

“The first indication of flu in our area, particularly ahead of large holiday gatherings, serves as a reminder of the importance of good health habits to minimize the spread of disease,” said Dr. Donald Kwalick, chief health officer.

The following measures are strongly emphasized to prevent getting or spreading germs:

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** Additionally, when you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect their health.
- **Stay home when you are sick.** Staying away from work, school, and errands when you are sick will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- **Clean your hands.** Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

The Clark County Health District has obtained more than 10,000 doses of flu vaccine which it will offer to high-risk individuals through flu shot clinics beginning Tuesday,

(more)

November 30. The clinics will continue for several days, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., only at the Ravenholt Public Health Center at 625 Shadow Lane. Vaccine will be offered to people over age 3 (pediatric doses for those under 3 years of age are not currently available) in the following priority groups identified by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- People aged 65 years and older
- People with underlying chronic medical conditions
- Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- Health-care workers involved in direct patient care
- Out-of-home caregivers and adult household contacts of children aged <6 months

Methods of payment for flu shots include Medicare Part B, Medicare Railroad Part B, Medicaid, Secure Horizons and Senior Dimensions. Patients must present their insurance card or Medicaid voucher at the time of service. For those not covered or without proof of insurance, the cost is \$20.

Patients can help speed the clinic process by bringing documentation of their high-risk status. Prescriptions, a doctor's note or the name and phone number of the patient's physician are acceptable documentation.

For more information on health district flu clinics and vaccine availability, the general public may call the district's flu information line at (702) 385-INFO (4636).

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