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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

H3N2 Influenza Update

[Ventura County, CA] – As of January 31st, Ventura County has seen 35 deaths from this influenza season, which started in October 2017. Of those 35 deaths, only 6 were adults under the age of 65, and there have been no deaths under 43 years of age.

“This flu season has taken a particularly hard toll on people. There has been a more aggressive flu virus this year and the season has lasted five weeks instead of the usual two,” said Ventura County Health Officer Dr. Robert Levin.

Patients who are at higher risk for complications include:

- Persons aged 65 years and older
- Children 5 years of age and younger as a whole with those 2 years of age and younger particularly vulnerable
- Persons with chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular (except hypertension alone), renal, hepatic, hematological (including sickle cell disease), and metabolic disorders or neurologic and neurodevelopment conditions
- People with immunosuppression, including those caused by medications or by HIV infection
- Women who are pregnant or postpartum (within 2 weeks after delivery)
- People aged younger than 19 years who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- American Indians/Alaska Natives
- People with extreme obesity (i.e., body-mass index is equal to or greater than 40)
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities

It is not too late to get immunized. CDPH recommends immunization of all persons 6 months and older who have not yet received influenza vaccine this season. Even if vaccine effectiveness is limited, immunization can reduce illness, hospitalization and death due to influenza. As a reminder, children younger than 9 years of age who have never received influenza vaccine before require 2 doses at least 4 weeks apart during their first season.

Supplies of influenza vaccine in the County are available. Flu vaccine can still be found at many individual doctor’s offices, clinics and pharmacies and can be received for low or no cost at the two public health clinics and at the ambulatory clinics referenced at the following link: www.vchcac.or/ph

Tamiflu availability has improved and can now be found at most pharmacies in the county. There are other things you can do to avoid the flu. See: <https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/index.html> for information on Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs) that help keep you and your family safe from getting and spreading respiratory illness like influenza.

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