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Dec. 7, 2009

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Fifth H1N1 (swine) flu death confirmed in Sarasota County

The Sarasota County Health Department received laboratory confirmation today of a fifth H1N1 (swine) flu-related death in the county. The death was in a 39-year-old female with an underlying medical condition. "While the majority of people who get the flu will fully recover, every death is tragic and is a sobering reminder that influenza is a serious disease and can be fatal. Our condolences go out to the family," said William Heymann, M.D., F.A.C.E.P., medical executive director for the Sarasota County Health Department.

Although Sarasota County has experienced recent decreases in influenza activity, H1N1 influenza continues to spread in our community.

Everyone is urged to take these actions:

- Get immunized. The H1N1 vaccine is now available to all Sarasota County residents.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow.
- Wash hands for 20 seconds using soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with people who are coughing or otherwise appear ill.

Stay healthy and informed. For information on H1N1 vaccine clinics for the general public, visit www.sarasotahealth.org, call the Flu Information Line at 941-861-2800, or visit a touch-screen health kiosk available at all libraries and Senior Friendship Centers throughout Sarasota County. Those who are in need of TDD access may call 941-861-1833.