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News Release

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SLVHD Reports First Hospitalized Case of Influenza This Season

(Salt Lake County) – Health officials at the Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) today announced the first hospitalization this season due to influenza, possibly indicating the unofficial start of flu season within the county. While other counties throughout the state and country have already recorded flu cases this season, this is the first case in Salt Lake County to be hospitalized.

The patient, an infant, was hospitalized with Type A influenza, the more severe and prevalent type seen each season, and is now at home recovering. The patient had not been vaccinated.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends flu vaccination for children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday. Parents, siblings and caregivers of infants too young for vaccination are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated to help protect against flu transmission. If infected, infants are at a high risk for complications from the flu.

“Preliminary data suggests that this year’s flu shot is a good match to the circulating influenza strains,” says Dr. Dagmar Vitek, SLVHD medical director. “This case is a timely reminder for residents to get vaccinated before the flu season picks up speed – not only to protect themselves but their loved ones as well.”

Flu shots are still available at all SLVHD public health clinics for \$25. Last year Salt Lake County had a total of 187 hospitalized cases, with the flu season peaking in February.

For information concerning influenza, visit the SLVHD website at www.slvhealth.org. Immunization clinic information is available at www.slvhealth.org/cs/html/flu2008.html.

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