



**For Immediate Release**

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## **News Release**

### **Utahn Dies from Complications of Novel H1N1 Flu**

*Public health officials say prepare but don't panic*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Public health officials have confirmed the first death in a person who had been diagnosed with Novel H1N1 influenza. Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) Executive Director Gary Edwards expressed sympathy for the family of the young male who was identified as a Salt Lake County resident between the ages of 18 and 25. He said, “It is difficult to lose a loved one under any circumstance, let alone when that death is of interest to the public.”

Health officials want to remind everyone to practice good hygiene when they're ill, coughing or sneezing into your elbow or a tissue. Dr. David Sundwall, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) says this death doesn't mean the public should panic. He added, “We knew we would have fatalities, and the virus is acting as we expected. We do know it seems to be hitting younger people harder, especially those who already have chronic health problems.”

“In fact, 70 % of the U.S. patients who have been hospitalized and all the deaths reported so far have also had underlying health issues,” said State Epidemiologist Dr. Robert Rolfs, “including asthma or chronic obstructive lung disease, diabetes, an immune disorder, cardiovascular disease, pregnancy, obesity, renal disease or cancer.”

“The most important message for us today is that there is still no reason to be alarmed by the H1N1 virus,” said Salt Lake Valley Health Department Medical Director Dr. Dagmar Vitek. “But Utahns must be alert to the symptoms and act appropriately to stop the spread of the disease.”

Symptoms of the virus are similar to seasonal influenza and can include a fever of 101 or higher, headaches, body aches, extreme fatigue and possible nausea and vomiting. You can stop the spread by washing your hands frequently, sneezing into your elbow, and blowing your nose into a tissue that you then discard properly.

“If you have those symptoms, however, don’t rush out to a doctor’s office or emergency room,” said Sundwall. “If you have H1N1, you risk infecting others when you leave your home, so call your health care provider first, and have him or her determine whether you need to be seen.”

For updated information on Novel Influenza A (H1N1), visit [www.health.utah.gov/h1n1](http://www.health.utah.gov/h1n1).

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