



Media Contact:
Pamela Davenport
801.468.2757
801.209.0986

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Salt Lake County health officials see peak in H1N1 second wave

Mayor Corroon encourages residents to remain vigilant, get vaccinated

(Salt Lake County) – While H1N1 flu activity remains higher than normal, Salt Lake County Mayor Peter Corroon and Salt Lake Valley Health Department (SLVHD) today announced that, for the third week in a row officials have seen a decrease in hospitalized cases and influenza-like illness in Salt Lake County.

Health department data also shows that emergency room visits and school absenteeism - both important markers of influenza activity – are declining in Salt Lake County. Officials, however, cautioned that the public should still expect to see some serious illness, even additional deaths from H1N1 this year.

“Even accepting the most optimistic predictions, Utahns should continue to get vaccinated as the vaccine becomes available,” says Mayor Corroon.

Since September 1, 2009, Salt Lake County has experienced seven deaths and 212 hospitalizations due to H1N1 and related complications. Approximately 70% of hospitalized cases involved underlying medical conditions.

Even states in the southern region of the U.S. which saw their H1N1 activity peak several weeks ago are still reporting widespread activity. Dr. Vitek, Medical Officer for SLVHD, says it is also possible that another wave of H1N1 could strike later this flu season.

The health department continues to recommend H1N1 immunization for members of priority groups. "We're continuing to target priority groups because they can benefit the most from immunization," said Dr. Vitek. "We expect there will be enough vaccine in a few weeks for anyone wanting to be vaccinated."

Vaccination Priority Groups:

- Pregnant women
- Household contacts of infants 6 months or younger
- Children age 6 months to 24 years
- Those under the age of 65 with chronic medical conditions.
- Health care workers and emergency services personnel with direct patient contact

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