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FIRST MERCED COUNTY DEATH RELATED TO PANDEMIC (H1N1) FLU

MERCED – The Merced County Department of Public Health announced the first Pandemic (H1N1) Flu-related death in a Merced County resident. Laboratory testing indicated the presence of Pandemic H1N1 Influenza virus in a sample submitted from an adult female with underlying medical conditions from the City of Merced.

“We would like to convey our deepest sympathy to the family of this patient,” commented Dr. Timothy Livermore, Merced County Public Health Officer. “H1N1 is present throughout our community and the nation, and it has normally shown itself to be a mild or moderate illness, much like seasonal flu. Unfortunately, in this instance, the patient did not recover.”

Dr. Livermore once again urged all local residents to take common sense steps to protect themselves from H1N1 flu.

“It is critically important for everyone to protect themselves and their families by practicing good hand and respiratory hygiene,” said Dr. Livermore. “This includes frequent hand washing, regular use of hand sanitizers, and covering coughs and sneezes with tissues. In addition, you and your children should stay home when you are sick.”

Flu is generally spread by direct contact with germs from an infected person, from either uncovered coughs or sneezes or by touching something the infected person has handled. People experiencing flu-like symptoms should call their health care provider for advice on whether to stay home or seek professional care.

The California Department of Public Health is no longer requiring reporting of all confirmed or probable cases, since the virus is now widespread throughout California. Instead, only hospitalized and fatal cases are reported. Information on these cases is updated weekly on the Merced County Pandemic Flu website, which residents can access at www.co.merced.ca.us/flu.

– 30 –

For more information regarding Merced County, please visit our website at www.co.merced.ca.us