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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pandemic H1N1 flu in Colusa County – What you need to know

Pandemic H1N1 flu is circulating in communities throughout California, including Colusa County. Cases of flu have been confirmed with laboratory tests in neighboring counties. "We know that the H1N1 flu is in our communities and are not surprised when we hear reports of students and others with the flu," stated Dr. Lou Anne Cummings, Colusa County Health Officer.

The symptoms of pandemic H1N1 flu are very similar to seasonal flu and usually include fever, a cough and/or sore throat. There may also be headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or muscle aches. Although most people that become ill with the H1N1 flu recover within a few days, without prescription medications or the need to seek medical attention, any person that becomes very ill with the flu should contact their doctor.

In order to prevent the spread of flu it is extremely important that anyone with a fever and cough or other flu symptoms stay home. Individuals are advised to remain at home until they have not had a fever for at least 24 hours, without taking fever reducing medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen. Healthcare workers should stay home for at least 7 days after they become ill – talk with your doctor about when it is time to return to work.

There will be two different influenza vaccines available this fall. "It will be "1+2" with one dose for usual seasonal flu and probably 2 doses for the pandemic H1N1 flu," stated Cummings. The seasonal flu vaccine is now arriving in doctors' offices, clinics and is available to anyone. If you are unable to get your seasonal flu vaccine from your medical provider Public Health will be offering a number of community clinics. The pandemic H1N1 vaccine is expected to start arriving the second half of October. The first doses will be directed to those at highest risk for serious complications from flu as well as healthcare workers and then to the rest of the community. Flu vaccine is the single most effective way to prevent flu.

Colusa County Public Health encourages everyone to always wash their hands, cover their coughs and stay home when they are sick. This helps protect against the flu and also against other common infections such as staph and foodborne illnesses.

For more information, please contact Colusa County DHHS Public Health at 458-0380 or check our website at www.colusadhhs.org.

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