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NEWS RELEASE

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Flu Activity Increasing in the Region; First Death Reported Vaccine Available at Eastern Idaho Public Health District

Cases of influenza, better known as “the flu”, are being reported throughout the nation and the state. The recent influenza related death of a south central Idahoan has alerted us all to the need to take precautions to avoid getting the flu. Most people who get influenza recover after a few days, but some people may develop serious complications and even die. Every year, flu contributes to the deaths of 36,000 people in the United States and causes more than 200,000 hospitalizations. Last flu season, 35 people died from flu-related illnesses in Idaho.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that infects 5-20% of people every year. Symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and sometimes a cough and sore throat. People who are especially vulnerable to complications of the flu include:

- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, heart or lung diseases
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu

Increased flu activity underscores the importance of people taking precautions to avoid influenza infection. Now is the time to call Eastern Idaho Public Health District (EIPHD) to schedule an appointment to receive the flu vaccine, either by injection or nasal mist. The health district has vaccine available for all ages, in all eight counties where offices are located. We also offer high dose injections which are more effective for older adults. Prices vary depending on the type of vaccine and depending on whether you are an adult or a child. EIPHD bills most insurance.

Listed below are the locations of Eastern Idaho Public Health District’s offices and the number to call to schedule an appointment. You can also find information on the health district’s website: <http://www.phd7.idaho.gov/>.

| <u>EIPHD Office:</u> | <u>For Appointment, Call:</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Bonneville County | 533-3235 |
| Clark County | 374-5216 or 745-7297 |
| Custer County | 879-2504 |
| Fremont County | 624-7585 |
| Jefferson County | 745-7297 |
| Lemhi County | 756-2123 |
| Madison County | 356-3239 |
| Teton County | 354-2220 |

In addition to getting vaccinated, people can protect themselves from the influenza virus and other respiratory illnesses by practicing good health habits. To avoid infection, you are urged to:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent infecting other people.
- Avoid people who appear sick and stay home from work/school/childcare when sick.
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after being out in the public. Use warm water and soap and wash for at least 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth until you have washed your hands.
- Get plenty of rest, drink liquids, eat nutritious foods and take part in physical activity.

For more information about influenza and how to stay healthy, please visit www.cdc.gov/flu.

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