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Department of Health Confirms First H1N1 Influenza Death 45-Year-Old Female from Sierra County Died

(Santa Fe) – The New Mexico Department of Health announced today that it has confirmed the state’s first death caused by H1N1 influenza. The 45-year-old female from Sierra County had end-stage liver disease and had been hospitalized since July 25. She died over the weekend.

“Our condolences go out to her family and friends,” said Health Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD. “She was in the high-risk category for developing complications from H1N1, and we are investigating how she may have contracted the virus.”

The Department of Health is planning mass vaccination clinics for H1N1 influenza when vaccine becomes available. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention expects to begin shipping vaccine as early as mid-October. This year, people need to get vaccinated against H1N1 flu and seasonal flu.

“The best step you can take to protect yourself and your family from influenza is to get vaccinated. This is especially important if you are at high risk for developing complications,” Dr. Vigil said. “We are carefully monitoring H1N1 disease in New Mexico and will keep you informed of new developments with the spread of disease, availability of vaccine and health officials’ recommendations.”

CDC’s Advisory Committee recently issued recommendations about priority groups for H1N1 vaccination. The recommendations target people who are the most likely to develop complications from H1N1 flu and or spread the disease to vulnerable individuals. They are:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months old
- Children and young adults age 6 months through 24 years
- Healthcare workers and emergency services personnel
- People age 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza