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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NEWS RELEASE

ST. JOHNS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT – H1N1 SWINE FLU STATUS REPORT

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA – St. Johns County Health Department continues to monitor the current flu situation in our community and, as always, continues to follow the guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

-NEW INFORMATION-

On Monday, August 24th, Florida Department of Health launched a toll-free number to provide public health information and updates on H1N1 Swine Flu. The Florida Flu Information Line can now be reached at **1-877-352-3581**. Live operators are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EDT, while pre-recorded information is available anytime outside those hours. Information is available in English, Spanish and Creole.

-CURRENT SITUATION-

St. Johns County Health Department received notification of its first laboratory-confirmed H1N1 (Swine) flu-related death of a St. Johns County resident on Tuesday, September 22, 2009. The individual was a 54-year old male with an underlying health condition.

"Our hearts and prayers go out to the family and friends of this individual," said Dr. Dawn Allicock, MD, MPH, Director of the St. Johns County Health Department. "While most cases of H1N1 swine flu are mild, there are exceptions like this one. This loss is unfortunate; however it is a sobering reminder that influenza can be serious. We continue to monitor this disease in our community and remind residents to take all precautions to avoid the flu."

While most cases of H1N1 Swine Flu are mild, there are exceptions. Pre-existing health conditions often play a role in how individuals react to the flu.

The Florida Department of Health/St. Johns County Health Department continues its enhanced surveillance and outreach to physicians, hospitals, and other health care professionals. The surveillance system, consisting of sentinel physicians reporting influenza activity, Florida Department of Health laboratories receiving specimens from physicians and hospitals, and its ability to monitor emergency room cases, is fully operational. The Florida Department of Health/St. Johns County Health Department has activated its response plan and is ready to respond, if needed.

Our Mission: *Promote, protect and improve the health of all people in Florida.*

Our Vision: *A healthier future for the people of Florida.*

Our Values: *- Integrity; Commitment to Service; Respect; Excellence; Accountability; Teamwork; Empowerment –*



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Currently, the Health Department is working with St. Johns County Administration, the Sheriff's Office, County Emergency Management, Fire Rescue, the School District, and Flagler Hospital to ensure that our community is well prepared.

-PRECAUTIONS-

Dr. Dawn Allicock, the Director of the St. Johns County Health Department, offers the following tips to avoid spreading the flu:

- Cough/sneeze into your elbow, sleeve, or a disposable tissue.
- Wash your hands well and often.
- Stay home if you are sick (at least 24 hours after fever is gone).
- Take time to get vaccinated!
- Individuals experiencing cough, fever, and fatigue, possibly along with diarrhea and vomiting should contact their health care provider.

For more information, please visit the St. Johns County Health Department website (www.StJohnsCHD.org). Additional information can be accessed through the Florida Flu Information Line, the Florida Department of Health website (www.MyFluSafety.com), and the CDC's website (www.cdc.gov).

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