



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**News Release**

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GOVERNOR

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**DOH CONFIRMS THIRD DEATH INVOLVING H1N1 FLU**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) has confirmed novel H1N1 influenza infection in an adult female who died on July 7 at Kona Community Hospital. She was in her early 50's and had several severe chronic underlying medical conditions. The Hawai'i island resident is the third death in the state associated with the new flu strain, and one of at least 263 reported nationwide over the past few months according to the CDC website. No further information about the patient's medical condition before death or identification will be released due to patient privacy considerations and federal law.

“Although flu was the primary cause of death for this individual, she had serious underlying medical conditions that exacerbated her condition and contributed to her decline and death,” said Dr. Sarah Park, chief of the Disease Outbreak Control Division and State Epidemiologist.

“We all need to take care of ourselves and be as healthy as we can be to maximize our ability to fight off infection.”

Cases of novel H1N1 influenza have been identified on the islands of O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i, Kaua'i, and Moloka'i. The DOH has recently seen a rise in reported influenza-like illness rates statewide. Although a portion of cases continue to be confirmed as caused by seasonal flu, the majority, over 1,000 cases from May 5 to July 10, 2009, have been laboratory confirmed as novel H1N1.

Of these cases, all but five have recovered or are recovering at home with no complications. One adult resident was hospitalized on O'ahu in June and has since recovered; one adult that

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resides on Maui became ill after traveling to Washington state in May, was hospitalized and recovered in Washington before returning home; two deaths occurred on O'ahu as a result of complications from the flu; and a third death recently occurred on the island of Hawai'i.

As with any influenza, the public is reminded to take the following steps to prevent spreading illness to others:

- **Stay at home when you are sick**; isolate yourself from others whenever possible;
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and dispose of used tissues;
- Wash your hands frequently, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth;
- Seek care if you have influenza-like illness (fever > 100°F plus cough or sore throat); and
- Stay healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of water, and getting plenty of rest and exercise.

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