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NEWS RELEASE

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H1N1 Implicated in Three More Area Deaths

Earlier Suspected Death Brings Oneida County Total to Five

The death of an adult in October and two more adult deaths reported this week brings the total of area deaths attributed to the H1N1 influenza to five, Oneida County Health Department officials announced today.

In July, an adolescent with an underlying medical condition became the area's first fatality attributed to H1N1. A second death involving an adult resident was confirmed earlier this week, bringing the number of confirmed H1N1 deaths at that time to two.

"Regrettably, we must report that two more adult deaths resulting from complications of the H1N1 virus have been confirmed and reported to the Oneida County Health Department, and that a previous death that occurred in October is now being regarded as a 'suspect' case of H1N1-related death," said Dr. Daniel W. Gilmore, Acting Director of Health.

Oneida County Executive Anthony J. Picente, Jr. said that while we grieve the tragic loss to each of these five area families, we recognize the deaths underscore the importance of taking every measure to prevent and curb the spread of the H1N1 influenza.

"Oneida County, through this office and the Health Department, will continue an aggressive and proactive program to protect our residents from this health threat," Picente said. He continued, *"Providing vaccine, as soon as availability allows, to the public at risk, through healthcare providers and to area hospitals is our first priority. In addition, the installation of hand-sanitizer dispensers in all county buildings and the implementation of posters and educational seminars promoting good hygiene and outlining the steps to limit the spread of flu will, I hope, have a positive impact in the coming weeks and months."*

An open H1N1 immunization clinic was attended by about 600 people who qualified for the vaccine under the priority guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). They included:

- Children and young adults 6-months to 24-years
- Parents and caregivers of infants under 6-months of age
- Healthcare workers and EMS personnel with direct patient contact
- Pregnant women
- Persons 25 to 64-years with underlying medical conditions or who are immuno-compromised

Persons in these groups at 'high risk' of complications from H1N1 are urged to get the vaccine as soon as it is available. Parents are encouraged to attend scheduled H1N1 school seminars to learn more about the risks from the virus and the availability of vaccine during the upcoming school vaccination clinics.

Health officials are reminding the public to cover all sneezes and coughs using a tissue or the crook of the arm, avoid persons with flu-like illness, to stay home from work and school if you experience flu-like illness and to remain home for 24-hours after a fever has subsided without the use of fever reducing medications.

For more information on the H1N1 influenza visit our web site at ocgov.net or log onto flu.gov.

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