



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2003

Contact: Leslie Ridgeway (619) 685-2239

MEDIA ADVISORY

FLU LEVELS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY HIGHER THAN IN PREVIOUS YEARS

Local Flu Identified As "A/Fujian" Strain, Same As Seen In Colorado and Texas

- WHO:** Nancy Bowen, M.D., County of San Diego Public Health Officer
Stephen Escoboza, Director of the *Health Care Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties*
Dr. Gary Vilke, Medical Director for County *Emergency Medical Services*
- WHAT:** Press conference to provide an overview of potentially severe flu season. The speakers will offer tips for preventing flu, explain who is most at risk, and encourage people to see their primary care physician or use an urgent care center, rather than use hospital emergency rooms to seek treatment for flu-like symptoms.
- WHEN:** 12:00 Noon
Friday, Dec. 5, 2003
- WHERE:** County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)
1700 Pacific Highway
San Diego, CA 92101
- WHY:** Influenza activity in San Diego County is at increased levels when compared to the same time period in recent years. This year, San Diego County is currently experiencing flu-activity levels that are typically seen in late December or early January. During the last week of November, approximately 11percent of all emergency department visits were related to influenza-like complaints. The HHSA Public Health Laboratory has seen an increase in the number of positive influenza virus detections reported from medical facilities around the county, and local flu culture has been confirmed as influenza A (H3N2), which is the same strain that has been seen in Colorado and Texas. Individuals at risk for complications from flu-related symptoms are highly encouraged to get their vaccine, however, vaccine availability at HHSA Public Health clinics is reaching an end.

###