



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

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INFLUENZA UPDATE – DEC. 31, 2003

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) reports additional influenza-associated deaths, and a decreased percentage of people with influenza-like symptoms at local emergency departments.

To date there have been 13 influenza-associated deaths, ranging in age from 16 to 93 years of age. The most recent reports include a 77 year old female, and two 86 year old males. Results are still pending on the cases of a 13-year-old girl and a 15-year-old boy, to determine if their deaths are associated with influenza.

For the week of Dec. 21 to Dec. 27, hospital emergency departments surveyed by HHSA reported that 23 percent of patients came in with influenza-like illnesses. This is down from 28 percent for the previous week's reporting period (Dec. 14 – Dec. 20). Percentages for each hospital are not available.

Since schools are out of session for the holidays, the percentage of students who were absent from school for any reason was not tracked for this period.

San Diego County remains at Level II in the *County Health Services Capacity Task Force Plan*, which means that HHSA and hospital partners, continue to monitor the situation carefully. According to Nancy Bowen, San Diego County Public Health Officer, the local health care system is handling the volume of patients due to influenza-associated illness.

There are limited doses of vaccine available in San Diego County. For information, please contact the *San Diego Community Health Improvement Partners* (SDCHIP); call toll free, 877-FLU-0202 or visit their Web site: www.sdchip.org

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