



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

Jan. 21, 2004

CONTACT: Leslie Ridgeway (619) 685-2239

INFLUENZA UPDATE – JAN. 21, 2004

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

To date there have been 22 influenza-associated deaths, ranging in age from 16 to 100 years of age. The most recent reports include a 100-year-old woman, an 83-year-old woman, and a 96-year-old man. 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 Jan. 11 – Jan. 17, hospital emergency departments surveyed by HHS reported that 8 percent of patients came in with influenza-like illnesses. This is down from 9 percent for the previous week's reporting period (Jan. 4 – Jan. 10). Percentages for each hospital are not available.

The percentage of students who were absent from school for any reason for the same time period remains at 7 percent for elementary schools, and 9 percent for middle/high schools.

San Diego County remains at Level II in the *County Health Services Capacity Task Force Plan*, which means that HHS and hospital partners, continue to monitor the situation carefully. According to Dr. 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.

This is the final scheduled weekly flu update.

###