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January 18, 2018

NEWS RELEASE

Two Additional Flu-Related Deaths in El Paso

EI PASO, Texas – The Department of Public Health has recorded two more flu-related deaths in El Paso this season with both cases involving men in their 90's who had received the flu vaccine but who had underlying medical conditions.

"We extend our condolences to the patient's family and other loved ones," said El Paso Department of Public Health Director Robert Resendes. "We continue to urge El Paso residents to be vaccinated and to do everything they can to prevent the flu as the season continues and as the number of cases increases exponentially."

There have been 2,181 confirmed flu cases reported in El Paso so far this season, almost 7 times greater than the 320 reported at this time last year.

"In consideration of the reduced efficacy of this season's flu vaccine and the high number of flu cases, the CDC is encouraging those with flu symptoms to seek out medical care as soon as possible," adds Resendes. "Those with active influenza are encouraged to forego attending school or work to reduce the spread of the disease."

This year's flu season in El Paso has still not officially peaked, meaning hundreds of additional flu cases are still quite possible in the weeks ahead. The Department of Public Health encourages El Paso residents to call 2-1-1 to find a flu vaccine provider. Residents are encouraged to practice the "4 C's."

1. **CLEAN** - Wash your hands often. Scrub your hands for at least 30 seconds with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
2. **COVER** – Cover your cough. Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Don't have a tissue? The crook of your elbow will do.
3. **CONTAIN** – Contain germs by steering clear of others who are sick. If you do get sick, stay home until you're well again.
4. **CALL** – Call or see your doctor if you or your child has a fever greater than 100 degrees.

An increase in flu activity has been reported locally and across the nation. Getting an annual flu vaccine not only protects you, but also protects others around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies young children, elderly, and people with existing medical conditions. The flu vaccine is recommended for everyone six months and older, including pregnant women. It takes about two weeks after the vaccination for your body to fully develop protection against the flu.

For more information on the City of El Paso Department of Public Health call 2-1-1 or visit www.EPHealth.com.

Media interested in interviews can visit the Public Health Department between 2:30 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. today. No need to call to schedule an interview; just arrive between 2:30 p.m. and 3:15 p.m.

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