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Stanislaus County Public Health Reports First Pediatric Flu Death of the Season

Stanislaus County - Stanislaus County Public Health reports its first pediatric influenza-associated death during the 2024-2025 flu season. To respect the family's privacy, no further details about the child will be disclosed. This tragic event highlights the critical importance of getting a yearly flu vaccine and taking other protective measures, particularly as the community faces one of the most severe flu seasons in recent years. Local emergency rooms have reported high patient volumes due to flu-related illnesses during this current flu season, reflecting a statewide surge in cases.

"This tragic loss deeply saddens us, and we extend our heartfelt condolences to the family. It serves as a stark reminder that influenza can be very dangerous, especially for young children and other high-risk individuals," said Dr. Thea Papasozomenos, the Stanislaus County Public Health Officer. "Getting a yearly flu vaccine is the best way to reduce your risk of flu and its potentially serious outcomes. Practicing good respiratory etiquette can also help protect you and reduce the spread of flu and other respiratory infections. We urge everyone to take flu prevention seriously to help reduce the spread and impact of this virus in our community, especially during this severe flu season."

To help stop the spread of flu viruses, Public Health strongly recommends that everyone take these precautions:

- **Get Vaccinated** to prevent influenza and its complications. It is not too late to get vaccinated since flu season can last until spring.
- **Practice Good Respiratory Etiquette**
 - **Cover coughs and sneezes** with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
 - **Wash hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing.
 - **Stay home** if you have flu-like symptoms. Stay home when sick, helps prevent the virus from spreading.

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If you start to feel flu symptoms—like fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, and tiredness—contact your healthcare provider to ask about the need for testing and antiviral medicine. Antiviral medicines can help lessen the severity and duration of the flu if taken within 48 hours of symptoms starting. Antiviral medicine is particularly important for high-risk groups, including young children, older adults, pregnant women, and those with underlying health conditions.

The current flu season is putting a lot of pressure on the healthcare system. To help ease the strain on emergency rooms, people are encouraged to consider seeing primary care doctors or urgent care centers for non-emergency issues. Over-the-counter flu test kits and other testing services are available at many retail pharmacies. For more information on flu prevention and vaccine locations, please visit [schsa.org](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.html) or the CDC's influenza resource page at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.html>.

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