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County Proclaims Local Emergency in Response to Pandemic H1N1 lu Virus

September 29, 2009

Santa Clara County, CA. —Today, the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors declared a local emergency in response to the pandemic H1N1 virus. The declaration followed a report from County Executive Jeff Smith and Health Officer Marty Fenstersheib regarding the current state of pandemic H1N1 and the threat to the residents of Santa Clara County. The Board's action also included allocating \$500,000 in funds for flu emergency response efforts.

Human cases of pandemic H1N1 have been increasing in the United States, including more than 2,000 reported cases in California and 155 reported hospitalized cases in Santa Clara County between April 3 and Sept. 15, and 167 reported deaths in California and 8 reported deaths in Santa Clara County during the same five month period. Studies reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predict that H1N1 transmission is likely to persist and increase in the Northern Hemisphere during fall and winter.

"We continue to take proactive measures to prepare and respond in the face of this increasing health threat by declaring a local emergency in response to the threat of H1N1" said Supervisor Liz Kniss, President of the County of Santa Clara Board of Supervisors. "Decisive action is called for with the expected increase of flu transmission in Fall and Winter.

Government Code Section 8630 authorizes the Board of Supervisors to proclaim a local emergency when the County is threatened or likely to be threatened by conditions of disaster or extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the County that are likely to be beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of the County. The County previously declared a local emergency following the identification of cases of the pandemic flu virus throughout the country earlier this year, proclaiming a local emergency on April 29, 2009, which the Board ratified on May 5, 2009, and later terminated on May 19, 2009.

"We have closely monitored the local and national status of H1N1, and believe it is imperative that we take the necessary steps to protect our community. The Board's declaration of emergency will enable us

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to put needed resources in place to respond to what is likely to be a flu season that will impact our entire community," said County Executive Jeff Smith.

Local surveillance indicates that the H1N1 virus continues to spread through the community and has begun to increase in the last few weeks. Surveillance has shown an increased number of people with influenza-like illness coming into Emergency Departments. Some schools are experiencing increased absenteeism. The Public Health Department is preparing for the distribution of the pandemic H1N1 vaccine, as well as antiviral medications, to try to limit the spread of the virus.

"Because the pandemic H1N1 virus is a new flu strain, people have little or no immunity and it has spread world-wide," Fentersheib said. "Everyone should practice basic preventative measures to help limit the spread of the flu including hand washing, and staying home when sick, and get your seasonal flu vaccine now."

SANTA CLARA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARMTENT RECOMMENDATIONS

By preparing now, you can help protect yourself and your family later. Don't forget food, water and medicines that you would want on hand for any emergency. For a helpful list, you can go to www.sccphd.org and look for the Home Care Guide. There you will find the information you need to prepare at home.

Because so many people may become sick with this new flu virus, each individual and family should prepare and have the supplies they may need. During the spring it became apparent pandemic influenza can have an affect on everyday life. Schools may have to be closed again, business may experience high absenteeism, and there may be spot shortages of supplies. Have a plan for yourself and your family in case any of these things happen.

The following common-sense actions can help to limit the spread of germs and the pandemic H1N1 virus:

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Stay away from sick people as much as possible.
- If you are sick, stay home. Cover your coughs and wash your hands. And stay away from others as much as possible.

It will be important to stay informed. Information about prevention and control actions will be shared in a number of ways. Visit the Public Health Department's web site at www.sccphd.org and by the CDC at www.pandemicflu.gov for the latest. On the Public Health Department site you can now subscribe to the e-newsletter which will send new information about H1N1 and other Public Health Department activities as it becomes available.