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N E W S

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**OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CONFIRMS FIRST H1N1
INFLUENZA DEATH**

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) announced today that a Butler County male in his 40s, who was infected with H1N1 influenza, died June 29. This is the first Ohio death linked to the pandemic strain of influenza. The patient had underlying health problems that may have contributed to his death.

The H1N1 infection was confirmed at the ODH laboratory today. ODH is unable to provide further details about the patient to protect confidentiality. Patient contacts are being identified to determine whether public health interventions are necessary.

“Our hearts go out to this man’s family and loved ones,” said ODH Director Alvin D. Jackson, M.D. “This is a sad, and not entirely unexpected, event as influenza and its complications cause some 3,000 deaths annually in Ohio, ranking it among the top 10 causes of death. We continue to urge Ohioans to take proper precautions and will monitor the situation closely.”

There have been 332 H1N1 deaths worldwide, including 127 in the United States, according to the World Health Organization.

Ohioans should take the following actions to help stay healthy:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Stay home if you get sick to limit contact with others and the spread of disease.

“Common sense is your best defense,” Jackson said.

As of Wednesday, ODH was reporting 108 confirmed and six probable H1N1 cases to date; for more information, please visit <http://www.odh.ohio.gov> or call the toll-free H1N1 information line at 1-866-800-1404 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; the line will not be staffed Friday, July 3.

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