December 23, 2019
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA HOTLINE
Harris County Public Health
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Harris County Public Health Confirms Flu-Related Pediatric Death
Residents Encouraged to Protect Themselves from the Flu

HOUSTON, TX - Harris County Public Health (HCPH) is confirming a flu-related death of an infant in Harris County. The boy, less than one-year of age, was a resident of northwest Harris County. This is the first pediatric death in Harris County this flu season (starting October 1, 2019). Due to confidentiality reasons and out of respect for the privacy of the family during this difficult time, no further information on the child will be released.

“We are deeply saddened to report a flu-related pediatric death, and our hearts go out to the child’s family, especially due to the holiday season. This is a somber reminder of the danger flu poses to our residents, especially those who are more vulnerable to develop serious flu complications,” said Dr. Umair A. Shah, Executive Director of Harris County Public Health. “We urge residents to get a flu shot and protect themselves and their loved ones.”

According to information provided last week by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there have been 19 pediatric flu-related deaths across the country during this current flu season. The CDC recommends getting a flu vaccine every year for all persons over six months of age.

Since flu season can last as late as May, HCPH reminds individuals to remain diligent in protecting themselves and their families against the flu. Harris County residents who have not had a flu shot are encouraged to get one as soon as possible as flu vaccine remains available throughout our community.

Getting vaccinated is especially important for the following groups:

- Anyone with certain medical conditions including asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and chronic lung disease;
- Pregnant women;
- Young children over the age of six months;

HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

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www.hcphtx.org
Anyone 65 years of age and older; and/or,
Anyone who lives with or cares for others who are at high risk of developing serious complications and/or lives with a child under 6 months of age.

Flu symptoms include the following signs and symptoms:
• Fever* or feeling feverish/chills;
• Cough;
• Sore throat;
• Runny or stuffy nose;
• Muscle or body aches;
• Headaches;
• Fatigue (very tired); and/or,
• Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

*It is important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

Persons who have flu-like symptoms (especially if they are serious) are asked to contact their healthcare provider for further advice. In order to avoid making others sick, stay home from work or school for at least 24 hours after not showing symptoms.

** HCPH reminds the community that flu is not a reportable disease to health departments unless it is a pediatric flu-related death. HCPH monitors flu activity mainly from lab reports, emergency room visits due to influenza-like illness, and school absenteeism data. However, pediatric flu-related deaths must be reported to local health authorities.**

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