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VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH REPORTS DEATH ASSOCIATED WITH H1N1 VIRUS

(RICHMOND, Va.)— The Virginia Department of Health reported the death today of a woman from the Prince William Health District who was diagnosed with the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus, also called swine flu.

Although the cause of death has not been confirmed, the H1N1 virus appears to have been a factor. The patient had an underlying health condition that put her at greater risk of complications from flu.

Nationwide, as of July 22, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports 263 deaths caused by the new virus.

“We extend our sympathies to the patient’s family and friends,” said State Health Commissioner Karen Remley, M.D., MBA. “Unfortunately, since seasonal flu results in about 36,000 deaths nationwide and approximately 1,000 die in Virginia each year from influenza and pneumonia, more deaths associated with the H1N1 virus are likely.”

The Commissioner reminds all Virginians to be vigilant in guarding against the flu and its spread. Symptoms of influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, headache, body aches, chills or fatigue. People who experience these symptoms are asked to call their health care provider or local health department to discuss the possible need for treatment.

Some people are at higher risk for complications from the virus and are strongly encouraged to call their health care providers if they experience flu-like symptoms. These include people with underlying chronic health conditions, pregnant women, the elderly and the very young.

People also are advised to protect their health against influenza and other infectious diseases by:

- Staying home from work or school when ill and limiting their contact with others to keep from infecting them
- Calling their health care providers or their health department before seeking care for influenza-like illness so that the necessary infection control measures can be put in place

- Covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and throwing the tissue in the trash after use
- Washing their hands often with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective.
- Limiting close contact with sick people
- Preventing the spread of germs by not touching their eyes, nose or mouth

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For more information on the novel Influenza H1N1 virus go online to the Virginia Department of Health at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov>, the Weekly CDC Novel H1N1 Flu Situation Update at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/update.htm> or the CDC Interim Patient Treatment and Risk Guidance at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/identifyingpatients.htm>.