

## First Flu-Related Death of 2018-2019 Flu Season Reported in Kern County

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Bakersfield, CA – Kern County Public Health Services Department has received confirmation of the first flu-related death in Kern County for the 2018-2019 flu season.

“We offer our condolences to the family,” says Matt Constantine, Director of Kern County Public Health Services. “The flu must be taken seriously and we encourage residents to take steps to protect themselves and their families.”

The Kern County Public Health Services Department encourages residents to get their flu vaccine annually. An annual flu vaccine is the first and best way to protect against the flu. “We encourage our residents to protect themselves and their loved ones, especially with the peak of flu season upon us,” says Constantine.

The flu can be a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Anyone can get sick from the flu and certain people are at greater risk for serious complications from the flu. These high-risk people include young children, pregnant women, adults 65 years and older, and anyone with chronic health conditions such as asthma or diabetes.

In addition to getting an annual flu vaccination, residents should also do the following to stop the spread of flu and other respiratory illnesses:

- Stay home when sick
- Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue and properly dispose of the used tissue
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

***The Kern County Public Health Services Department offers flu shots for \$9.00 at our Public Health Clinics, which are located in Bakersfield (1800 Mt. Vernon Avenue), Buttonwillow, Delano, Shafter, Rosamond, Ridgecrest and Taft. Call 661-321-3000 or visit [www.kernpublichealth.com](http://www.kernpublichealth.com) for more information regarding dates and times of clinics.***