



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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H1N1 PLANNING AND RESPONSE REMAIN A PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITY

NASHVILLE – Tennessee continues its efforts to ensure the health of state residents during the flu pandemic. Late last week, state officials from the Departments of Health, Education and Homeland Security participated in the 2009 Flu Summit organized by the United States government, where federal planning and response efforts were discussed.

“The summit gave federal and state officials the opportunity to share strategies and information that will be helpful in preparation and planning for the upcoming flu season and the flu pandemic,” said Health Commissioner Susan R. Cooper, MSN, RN. “Flu-related illness continues across the state and U.S., and this is expected with a pandemic. However, I urge all Tennesseans to remain vigilant and practice good hygiene to prevent the spread of flu.”

At present, most of the people who have become sick with novel H1N1 in the United States have not become seriously ill and have recovered without hospitalization. Cases have been confirmed in all 50 states in the U.S., with an official count at more than 37,000 cases, with 211 fatalities. To date, there have been 246 confirmed cases of the novel H1N1 virus in Tennessee with one reported death.

As the upcoming influenza season approaches in the fall and winter months, it is uncertain how this new virus may affect U.S. populations. The Tennessee Department of Health encourages the public to help protect their communities by following simple health and hygiene practices, including frequent hand washing, covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, avoiding close contact with those who are ill and staying home when sick.

Vaccines are a very important part of a response to novel H1N1 influenza. The federal government is working closely with manufacturers to develop a novel H1N1 vaccine, a long multi-step process requiring several months to complete. Additional information on the availability and distribution of H1N1 vaccine is forthcoming.

“The Department of Health remains in close communication with federal officials, and we will provide updated information related to H1N1 and vaccine as it becomes available,” said State Epidemiologist Tim F. Jones, MD.

For more information on H1N1 flu, visit the Web at <http://health.state.tn.us/H1N1.htm> or <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>.

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The news release is available online at <http://news.tennesseeanytime.org/taxonomy/term/30>.

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