

Panhandle

Public Health District

For more information, contact: **Kim Engel**, 308-760-2415 or kengel@pphd.ne.gov

January 4, 2024

For Immediate Release:

Pediatric Influenza Death Reported to Panhandle Public Health District by DHHS

A pediatric flu-related death in Panhandle Public Health District's service area has been reported by Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

"We share our deepest condolences with the family in the loss of their loved one," said Kim Engel, Director of Panhandle Public Health District.

In Nebraska, there have been a total of three flu-related deaths so far this season. Nationally, 20 children have died from flu this season.

Antiviral drugs like oseltamivir (Tamiflu) should be used as early as possible in people who have flu-like illness. For those who aren't sick, common sense preventive measures along with flu vaccines can help prevent flu and other winter illnesses.

Protect yourself from the flu by:

- Everyone six months and older be vaccinated for flu
- Washing your hands often
- Avoiding contact with people who are sick
- Staying home from work, family gatherings and social functions if you're sick
- Covering your mouth and nose when you cough with a tissue or sleeve, not your hands
- Eating healthy and getting plenty of rest
- Don't smoke

Influenza vaccination can reduce flu-related illnesses, visits to the doctor, missed work and school, and flu-related hospitalizations and deaths.

PPHD accepts most insurance and offers free Vaccines for Children (VFC), Vaccines for Adults, and Bridge Access Program (BAP) to support some vaccines. Call your local vaccine provider or PPHD at 308-633-2866 to confirm if you or your family are eligible for one of these free vaccine programs.

While flu can make anyone sick, certain people are at greater risk for serious complications:

- Young children
- Adults 65 years of age or older
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic lung disease (like asthma and COPD), diabetes (type 1 and 2), heart disease, neurologic conditions, and certain other long-term health conditions

- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities

For the week ending December 23, 2023, the Panhandle's flu case rate per 100,000 is highest in the state. A weekly update of influenza and other respiratory diseases in Nebraska can be accessed at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Seasonal-Respiratory-Diseases.aspx>.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety, and quality of life for all who live, learn, work, and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community. Visit our website www.pphd.ne.gov.