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NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION NEWS RELEASE

Nevada State Health Division Urges: Take Precautions To Help Prevent the Spread of Influenza

*Prevention measures put in place today are good practice for reducing severity of any future avian
(bird) flu pandemic*

Carson City – The Nevada State Health Division strongly recommends that Nevadans take steps to prevent the spread of influenza (“flu”) and other respiratory illnesses during this year’s flu season.

Bradford Lee, M.D., Nevada State Health Officer, urges everyone to take personal responsibility and practice good personal hygiene as a first line defense in preventing illness. “I encourage you to wash your hands frequently and cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Also, people with flu-like symptoms should stay home to avoid infecting co-workers or classmates. Parents should try to keep babies and young children away from people who have flu-like illnesses.”

Dr. Lee continued, “Prevention is the key in decreasing the chance of becoming ill. The preventive measures we put in place today will help us not only decrease the incidence and prevalence of influenza, but may help us battle a possible avian influenza pandemic in the future. The good news is the avian influenza virus **has not** been detected in any birds or humans in the United States. While we continue to plan and prepare for a global outbreak of a new and potentially deadly influenza virus, we also need to remain vigilant in our efforts to prevent respiratory illness throughout the year.”

While everyone is encouraged to receive the influenza vaccine, people in the following groups have a higher risk for developing serious complications of the flu:

- All children aged 6-23 months
- Adults aged 65 years or older
- Adults and children 2 years of age and older with chronic lung or heart disorders including heart disease and asthma
- All women who will be pregnant during flu season
- Adults and children 2 years of age and older with chronic metabolic diseases (including diabetes), kidney diseases, blood disorders (such as sickle cell anemia), or weakened immune systems, including persons with HIV/AIDS
- Children and teenagers, 6 months to 18 years of age, who take aspirin daily



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- Residents of nursing homes, long-term care facilities and other chronic-care facilities
- Health care workers who provide direct, hands-on care to patients
- Household members and out-of-home caregivers of infants under the age of 6 months (Children under the age of 6 months cannot be vaccinated)

People who are unsure whether or not they would be categorized in one of these groups should contact their health care providers.

Preventive measures during the flu season include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too.
- Stay home when you are sick. If possible, stay home from work and school when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- Wash your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose and mouth.

Flu season typically peaks in the United States between December and March. Because each flu season's severity fluctuates, it is not known how severe the 2005-2006 season might be.

To learn more about influenza, please visit the following websites:

<http://health2k.state.nv.us> and click on "flu," located under "Hot Topics,"

www.cdc.gov/flu

Some public vaccination clinics may be posted at www.lungusa.org (American Lung Association)

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