

Swine flu prevalent throughout LT Basin

By Kathryn Reed



This week California and Nevada received their first shipments of the H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine.

This is a good thing because several cases have been reported throughout the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Twenty-four cases were confirmed on the South Shore in July, 11 in August and 29 in September.

El Dorado County has documented 52 swine flu cases, with one person on the West Slope dying from the illness.

Barton Community Hospital has treated two patients with swine flu since May. Hospitals test for H1N1, not doctors' offices.

Throughout California as of this week 2,510 people were hospitalized because of swine flu and 181 people have died. U.S. figures are 16,174 in the hospital and 1,379 deaths.

Placer County officials are estimating 100,000 residents just in the North Shore county may become infected with the potentially deadly flu in the next year.

In a Field Poll survey released this week it showed 51 percent of Californians are worried about swine flu. The theory is with so many not concerned about it, the odds are they will not get the vaccine.

Most cases of H1N1 are not life threatening. Pregnant women, children younger 5 and adults older than 65 are most at-risk.

A notice at Lake Tahoe Community College tells people with flu symptoms to stay home.

Schools everywhere are warning parents to keep kids home if they are sick.

“We have been working with the El Dorado County Health Department and Lake Tahoe Unified School District and have placed an order to cover our usual vaccine population and the school district,” Barry Keil, director of pharmacy for Barton Health, said in a prepared statement. “We anticipate receiving enough Flumist for younger children and enough injections for older children and adults.”

Students in Douglas County School District are vaccinated through the Carson City Health Department.

“Our county will receive the vaccine in several shipments,” El Dorado county Health Officer Olivia Kasirye said in a press release. “For people who are anxious to get the vaccine, we ask that they be patient. We believe that eventually everyone who would like to get the vaccine will be able to receive it.”

Health officials everywhere say the same thing “ people who develop flu symptoms such as fever with cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, fatigue, diarrhea or vomiting, should stay home from work, school and not visit any public places “ even grocery stores. Remain home until the fever has been gone for at least 24 hours.

The Centers for Disease Control and Preventions says the ways to help prevent the spread of H1N1 include:

- * Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw it away. If tissues aren't available, cough into your elbow or sleeve (not your hand).

- * Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after

coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners containing at least 60 percent alcohol are also effective.

- * Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth to avoid spreading germs.

- * Avoid close contact with people who are sick (hand holding, hugging, kissing).

- * Avoid sharing items such as food, drinks, and lip gloss with others.

Ways to get more info about swine flu:
www.bartonhealth.org/flu, www.flu.gov,
www.edcgov.us/publichealth, <http://www.placer.ca.gov/>,
www.cdph.ca.gov, and <http://flu.nv.gov/>.