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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 16, 2009

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H1N1 FLU UPDATE PALM BEACH COUNTY

PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL— The Palm Beach County Health Department is continuing its surveillance and monitoring of the H1N1 Swine flu virus. The County's **eleventh** death was confirmed today in a 78 year old female who was hospitalized with an underlying illness. To date the county has seen 83 persons hospitalized with the virus and 37 of those people were admitted to the ICU.

Health Department Director, Alina Alonso, M.D. said, "We extend our sincere sympathies to the family of this woman. This pandemic continues to claim lives, so it is important for all to remain alert to the signs and symptoms of this flu and seek medical attention if the fever, coughs and sneezes worsen. Unfortunately, the flu virus can leave vulnerable individuals susceptible to opportunistic infection, so it's important for those with chronic illness or conditions that put them at risk to get vaccinated against flu."

Experience with this virus shows this strain, like all influenza, is unpredictable. However, because novel H1N1 is a new virus, many people may have little or no immunity against it, and illness may be more severe and widespread as a result. In addition, it is recommended those at risk should get the H1N1 vaccine to protect against the novel H1N1 virus. At this time, the Health Department, along with the CDC, advises that businesses, schools, day care centers, and the like remain open even if a case of H1N1 is identified. These facilities should follow the protocols they have in place for any ill person.

Dr. Alonso recommends the following:

People with respiratory illness should avoid spreading infections, including influenza, to others in the community:

- **Avoid close contact with people who are coughing or otherwise appear ill.**
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.**
- **Cover your cough and sneezes**
- **Wash hands frequently to lessen the spread of respiratory illness.**
- **Stay home if you are sick.**
- **Get Vaccinated.**

If you think you have influenza, please call your health care provider or the health department and discuss whether you need to be seen in their office, emergency department or stay home. Three websites are also updated regularly: www.FightFluFlorida.com, www.cdc.gov, www.myflusafety.com locally information can be obtained by calling 211 or 1-888-411-4FLU (4358).

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