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NEWS RELEASE

El Paso Ends Year with High Flu Activity, Death

Department encourages vaccination, prevention methods

EL PASO, Texas – The City of El Paso Department of Public Health is confirming state and national reports that the area has seen a significant amount of flu activity in the region, and that one man has been confirmed as the first flu-related death this season. As of the end of 2018, there were 666 confirmed flu cases recorded for this flu season. That is compared to 434 cases reported during the same time during the 2017 flu season.

The first flu-related death involves a man in his 80's who had underlying medical conditions and who had not been vaccinated against the disease. Despite the man's age, department officials continue to encourage all residents to receive the influenza vaccine and do whatever they can to stop the spread of the virus.

"We are seeing a significant amount of flu cases being reported in patients who are between one and 18 years of age," said Fernando Gonzalez, Lead Epidemiologist. "We must insist that our younger population and parents of our children be vigilant, and remind them that the first line of defense is a flu shot."

In addition to the flu vaccine, public health officials remind the public to practice the four Cs in order to help reduce the incidence of infection. They are:

1. **CLEAN** - Wash your hands often. Scrub your hands for at least 30 seconds with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
2. **COVER** – Cover your cough. Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Don't have a tissue? The crook of your elbow will do.
3. **CONTAIN** – Contain germs by steering clear of others who are sick. If you do get sick, stay home until you're well again, so you don't spread more germs.
4. **CALL** – Call or see your doctor if you or your child has a fever greater than 100 degrees.

Additional information is available at www.EPHealth.com or www.EPSalud.com under the flu tab.

There were 21 flu-related deaths during last year's flu season.

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