

**For immediate release:**

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Contact: Olivia Lara  
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*Department of Health Secretary Issues a Statement*

(Santa Fe) -- New Mexico Department of Health's tracking of influenza shows a continuing decline from the peak in mid-February. Department of Health Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Catherine Torres states, "Our rates of influenza-like illness seen in clinics across the state have declined from a peak of 6 percent seen in mid- February to 3.9 percent reported last week." She has indicated that there are three types of influenza circulating this year in New Mexico and the United States which include H3N2, H1N1, and B. Dr. Torres also adds that our surveillance system has seen no increase along the border in the last few weeks.

The influenza season this year has been dominated by H3N2 with type B and H1N1 occurring throughout the season at lower levels than H3N2. "Following the 2009/2010 H1N1 pandemic, we are seeing H1N1 becoming another seasonal influenza strain," says Dr. Mack Sewell, State Epidemiologist with the Department of Health. According to Dr. Sewell, Mexico has also seen a predominance of H3N2 influenza virus this year along with influenza type B.

The Department of Health established a cross border influenza surveillance system in conjunction with the Office of Border Health and health officials in Chihuahua, Mexico in 2007/2008. Initially, the system tracked influenza in the Las Cruces, El Paso, Juarez region. Today, the system tracks influenza in multiple sites along the New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico border. The Department of Health will continue to monitor influenza activity along our border with U.S. and Mexican border health officials.

In a typical season, New Mexico experiences 150-300 estimated deaths due to influenza and related pneumonia. Surveillance for influenza consists of influenza-like illness tracking in clinic sites throughout the state, laboratory surveillance to determine the types of influenza circulating, and death reports.

The Department of Health reports a plentiful supply of vaccine this year. The vaccine protects against all three types of influenza that are circulating.

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