

# SIERRA COUNTY Human Services



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Director

## Social Services

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## Mental Health/Drug/Alcohol

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## P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Influenza (Flu) activity has continued through the summer months this year. This is directly related to the pandemic H1N1 flu, previously called the Swine Flu. As expected, when the 2009-10 school year began, Sierra County has had some probable cases in children at the schools and a higher level of absenteeism. Symptoms of the pandemic H1N1 flu are the same as the seasonal flu each year:

- Sudden onset of fever (>100 F), body aches, runny nose, cough, shortness of breath, headache, sore throat, and some may have vomiting and diarrhea.

The skilled nursing facility in Loyalton is practicing a reverse isolation, meaning that they are trying to keep anyone sick out of the hospital to protect the patients. That does not mean anyone in the hospital has H1N1 or any influenza at this time.

The California Department of Public Health is recommending that people with influenza-like illness remain home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medication. People who are considered at high-risk or are feeling very ill should contact their medical provider immediately. People who have underlying medical conditions, obesity, pregnant women, and children 5 years and younger, are most at risk to develop complications with the pandemic H1N1 flu.

At this time only hospitalized cases, fatal cases presumed to be caused by the H1N1 virus, and pregnant women with influenza like symptoms are being tested for the novel H1N1 virus. It is not possible to test everyone because it would overwhelm the laboratories with samples.

Sierra County Public Health will be holding their annual Drive-Thru Seasonal Flu Clinics October 9<sup>th</sup> in Downieville and October 10<sup>th</sup> in Loyalton. The Health Department will also be doing a flu-mist clinic in the schools October 5<sup>th</sup> in Loyalton and October 6<sup>th</sup> in Downieville for seasonal flu. The pandemic H1N1 flu vaccine will be available, possibly sometime in October. The Health Department will advise everyone where they can receive the pandemic H1N1 flu vaccination once it arrives.

Protect yourself, your family and your employees right now and remain diligent throughout the flu season by covering your cough, washing your hands often, using hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available and staying home when you are sick. Keep your distance from people who are coughing. Eating well and getting plenty of rest is also important to staying healthy now and during flu season. If you develop severe flu-like symptoms, please call your doctor and be seen if symptoms worsen.

Sierra County Public Health staff are receiving regular updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Public Health. For the most up to date information, please go to <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu>. You may also contact Sierra County Public Health at (530) 993-6701, or visit our website at <http://www.sierracounty.ws> for current updates.

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