

TO: ALL MEDIA

DATE: 17 AUGUST 2009

EMBARGO: NONE

**CHILDREN UNDER-5, THE ELDERLY, PREGNANT WOMEN AND PEOPLE WITH COMPROMISED IMMUNITY AT HIGHTENED RISK OF H1N1 INFLUENZA**

As the numbers of new H1N1 influenza increase rapidly, pregnant women are amongst those at heightened risk. These include children under-5years, the elderly and people with compromised immunity.

While this group of people also at increased risk during outbreaks of seasonal influenza, the risk takes on added importance in the current H1N1 influenza outbreak, which continues to affect younger age groups than that seen during seasonal epidemics.

As of the 14th August 2009, KwaZulu-Natal has a total of 296 persons with H1N1 influenza including the death of a young expecting mother of 23 years of age on the 12th August 2009 at Addington Hospital. The affected Districts are as follows;

<b>District</b>	<b>Town/city</b>	<b>Death/s</b>	<b>Number</b>
Ethekwini	Durban	1	<b>175</b>
Umgungundlovu	Pietermaritzburg	-	<b>58</b>
Uthungulu	Empangeni/ Richards Bay	-	<b>25</b>
Ileembe	Ballito	-	8
Ugu	Pennington	-	15
Zululand	Vryheid	-	4
Amajuba	Newcastle	-	5
Umzinyathi	Dundee	-	1
Sisonke	Underberg	-	1
Unknown		-	3

We also know that pregnant women are more likely to get sick than others and have more serious problems with seasonal flu. These problems may include early labor or severe pneumonia. We don't know if this virus will do the same, but it should be taken very seriously.

Should this predisposed group have any of these signs, they are advised to seek emergency medical care right away:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath,
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen,
- Sudden dizziness,
- Confusion,
- Severe or persistent vomiting,
- Decreased or no movement of your baby, and
- A high fever that is not responding to treatment.

For more information contact Chris Maxon at 083 285 0567.

ENDS

ISSUED BY:

KWAZULU-NATAL: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH