

Second Lee County death attributed to swine flu

By LIZ FREEMAN

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LEE COUNTY — A second Lee County man has died of swine flu among a wave of nine new deaths in Florida connected to the H1N1 virus, state health officials reported Wednesday.

Officials with the Lee County Health Department had no detailed information about the man and had not received confirmation that the death was from swine flu, said Jennifer James-Mesloh, spokeswoman for the Lee department. The report came from the state Department of Health in Tallahassee.

“We knew we had a 53-year-old man who died and we had sent a sample off (to the lab), she said. “We haven’t gotten confirmation back from the state lab.”

The other eight swine-flu related deaths occurred among a 27-year-old woman in Osceola County, a 28-year-old woman in Hillsborough County, and a 25-year-old woman and a 70-year-old woman in Orange County. There were also four deaths in Dade County involving a 45-year-old woman, a 53-year-old man, a 60-year-old man, and a 65-year-old man.

The nine new deaths bring the total swine flu deaths that have been confirmed by laboratory results to 41 in the state.

James-Mesloh said the swine flu pandemic is expected to impact 30 to 40 percent of the population from spring through the next 18 months to 24 months. That means five million people in the state of Florida will be infected with swine flu, she said.

With respect to swine flu-related deaths, public health officials expect one death for every 1,000 people who contract swine flu, so that would mean 5,000 swine-flu related deaths statewide.

In Lee County, about 160,000 people are expected to contract swine flu and they expect 160 deaths over the next two years during the pandemic, she said.

There usually are 75 to 80 deaths from flu and pneumonia-related complications each year during a normal flu season.

“That’s about what we are expecting,” she said.

The three state laboratories handling swine flu testing, in Tampa, Miami and Jacksonville, are each receiving 150 samples a day to test.



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