

Charlotte County reports first death of person with swine flu

11 a.m. update

The Charlotte County Sheriff's Office released the name of the county's first H1N1 (Swine Flu) death. At a press conference in Punta Gorda this morning, the County Health Department released information about the H1N1 death.

On Sep. 1 at 1:41 p.m., the CCSO received a call from the daughter of Cheryl Ann McCabe, 46, at 1219 Yarmouth St., Port Charlotte, who found her deceased in the bedroom. When deputies arrived, it was determined that McCabe had been deceased for some time; EMS arrived and confirmed the death. A paramedic asked everyone to vacate the house at that time because of fear that the house might be contaminated with some type of hazardous condition, and appropriate actions were taken.

The Sheriff's report said this concern was because another unexpected death occurred at this same residence on Aug. 29 with the death of McCabe's boyfriend, 42 year old Raymond Bei. His death was reported to CCSO 11:16 a.m. that day by McCabe. The report said he had extensive medical issues. Bei's doctor signed the death certificate and he was removed to a local funeral home.

9 a.m. update

The Charlotte County Health Department has confirmed the first death in Charlotte County of a person with H1N1 (swine) flu.

At this time, cause of death has not been determined by the medical examiner's office.

The deceased is a 46-year-old female resident with chronic disease.

"Our hearts go out to the family and friends for their loss, and we continue to encourage people to take precautions against flu-like illness by following proper hygiene practices" said Steven Mitnick, administrator of the Charlotte County Health Department.

While most cases of H1N1 flu are mild, there are exceptions. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has advised people with chronic pre-existing conditions to be especially vigilant to prevent against infection. The best way to reduce everyone's risk of contracting the H1N1 flu is to frequently wash your hands during the day, stay home if you are feeling ill, sneeze and cough into your sleeve and social distance (keep a distance of six feet).

If someone experiences mild flu-like symptoms, they should treat their symptoms with lots of fluids, bed rest and appropriate medications. However, if symptoms worsen, seek professional medical care.

Symptoms may include:

Fever (>100°F)

Headache

Dry cough

Runny or stuffy nose

Body aches

An H1N1 flu vaccine is expected to arrive in Charlotte County around mid-October, and we are working on a plan to first distribute those vaccines to the 5 highest risk groups (pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years, and people ages 25 through 64 years with chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems), then the vaccine will be made available to the general public. The goal is to vaccinate everyone in Charlotte County; however, this is voluntary program.

For more information, visit our website www.CharlotteCHD.com or call 877-352-3581.