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Public Health Officials Report First Pediatric Flu-Associated Death of 2024-2025 Season

RIVERSIDE, CA (May 15, 2025) – A Coachella Valley teen died from a flu-related illness – the first pediatric death of the 2024-2025 flu season in Riverside County.

The death occurred in late March and was identified through death records, which can take months to confirm while the cause of death is being determined and then finalized. The teen was not believed to have any underlying health conditions; a flu vaccination record was not located.

The death is a tragic reminder of the danger that influenza and other vaccine-preventable diseases can pose, even for individuals who are generally healthy, said Dr. Jennifer Chevinsky, Public Health Officer for Riverside County.

"We are committed to continuing our efforts to partner with the community to prevent further tragedies like this one," Chevinsky said. "We must remain vigilant and proactive in reducing the spread of infectious diseases through vaccination and hygiene practices."

This season, 226 child deaths which range in age from 0 -17 from flu-related illness have been reported nationwide – the highest number in 15 years, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). The previous high of 207 was reported during the 2023-2024 season.

There have been 25 total pediatric deaths related to flu reported in California, according to [California Department of Public Health](#).

So far this season, among children who were eligible for influenza vaccination and with known vaccine status, [90% of reported pediatric deaths in the United States occurred in children who were not vaccinated against influenza](#).

Vaccine hesitancy and lower levels of flu vaccination are possible contributing factors to the higher and more severe trends for influenza among children, Chevinsky said.

"Getting the seasonal flu vaccine remains one of the best ways to protect both children and adults from influenza. Staying up to date on all recommended vaccines is essential—not only for school or travel, but also during life changes, such as starting a job in healthcare or food service, where the risk of exposure or spreading infectious diseases may be higher," Chevinsky said. "Vaccines

are one of the most effective tools we've ever had to protect our communities from preventable illness and helps us stay healthy so we can keep doing the activities we enjoy.”

Most people who get flu will recover in a few days to less than two weeks, but some will develop complications such as pneumonia that can be life-threatening. Immediate medical care should be sought for children experiencing chest pain, trouble breathing, seizures, severe muscle pain, dehydration (dry mouth) or ribs pulling in with each breath while battling flu.

Additional warning signs include:

- Bluish lips or face
- Not alert or interacting when awake
- Fever above 104 degrees Fahrenheit that is not controlled by fever-reducing medicine
- Any fever in children younger than 12 weeks
- Fever and/or cough that improves but then returns or worsens
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions

Influenza season generally runs from October to April. Vaccinations for flu and other illnesses are available at medical offices and pharmacies, and through RUHS - Public Health's [vaccine clinics](#).

For more information, visit www.ruhealth.org/publichealth.

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About Riverside University Health System – Public Health

Riverside University Health System – Public Health (RUHS - PH) serves as Riverside County's public health department. RUHS-PH offers a range of services and programs to promote and protect the health of all county residents and visitors in service of the well-being of the community. RUHS includes the 439-bed Medical Center in Moreno Valley, Calif., 14 Community Health Centers across Riverside County, and Behavioral Health, which provides emergency and inpatient psychiatric care. Visit www.ruhealth.org to learn more.