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All Orange County Residents Now Eligible For Flu Shots

(Santa Ana) – Orange County residents of all ages are now eligible for a flu shot, following the lifting of age and health condition requirements previously imposed by the California Department of Health Services.

“The age and health condition requirements were effective in ensuring that vaccine was first available for those at the highest risk of complications from influenza,” said Dr. Margaret Beed, Health Care Agency Chief Medical Officer. “Now that the restrictions have been lifted, we want to let everyone in Orange County know that it’s not too late to vaccinate.”

Flu season in Orange County often peaks between January and March, and so far this year, activity has remained low, indicating that this year’s flu season may not have yet peaked. Local health care providers have ordered more than 37,000 doses of flu vaccine, so those interested in obtaining a flu shot are asked to first check with their private physician. Another option for healthy individuals between five and 49 years of age is the Flu Mist nasal flu vaccine, which is available through retail pharmacies. If you are unable to obtain a flu shot through your private physician, call the Health Care Agency’s Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 for assistance.

To help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses, Orange County residents are urged to:

- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash their hands with soap and warm water or a hand sanitizer to help protect themselves from germs.
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay healthy by eating nutritious foods, drinking plenty of water, exercising, getting plenty of rest and not smoking.
- Stay home when they are sick to avoid infecting their co-workers and friends.

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Orange County Kicks-Off Proposition 63 Planning Process

(Santa Ana) – The kick-off of Orange County’s planning efforts for Proposition 63 – The Mental Health Services Act – will be held Wednesday, January 26, 2005 with information sessions to be held from 3-5 p.m. and again from 6-8 p.m. in the Mother Louis Room of the St. Joseph’s Justice Center, 480 S. Batavia, Orange.

Orange County’s Proposition 63 Kick-Off Celebration is an opportunity to discuss MHSA guidelines and outline a proposed planning process that will allow maximum participation by mental health consumers, families, providers, key agency partners, advocates and other stakeholders. One of the key elements will be the development of a MHSA Steering Committee and a number of working groups that will focus on individual parts of the initiative. Among those participating in the kick-off event will be Maureen Kochen, RN, County Mental Health Board Chairman; Mark Refowitz, Health Care Agency Deputy Agency Director for Behavioral Health Services; and other members of the Mental Health Board.

Proposition 63 was approved by California voters in November 2004 and became law on January 1, 2005, providing a unique opportunity to transform the public mental health system in Orange County. Through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), local counties will receive funding to expand mental health services and develop innovative programs for mentally ill children, adults and older adults.

# # #
Health Care Providers Have New Opportunity To Order Influenza Vaccine

(Santa Ana) – Health care providers in Orange County and around the United States now have the opportunity to order influenza vaccine directly from the manufacturer, with the option of returning unused vaccine for a credit.

The changes announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Health Services are designed to encourage health care providers to order and make available to their patients the estimated 3.1 million doses of flu vaccine still available to protect individuals this season. Since there are indications that influenza has not yet peaked in California, it is not too late to receive a flu shot and the vaccine is now available to people of all ages following the lifting of previous restrictions based on age and health factors.

Health care providers interested in ordering additional flu vaccine through sanofi pasteur (formerly known as Aventis Pasteur) can log on to www.VaccineShoppe.com or call 1-800-VACCINE (1-800-822-2463). Providers may return unused vaccine for a credit and will have financial responsibility for return shipping costs only.

The Federal government has also released for general use the influenza vaccine that had been reserved for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, since it appears there is a surplus of vaccine available for children. In Orange County, the VFC vaccine will be used to supplement vaccine that is still available through the county’s Public Health Clinics.

Individuals in Orange County who want to receive a flu shot are asked to first check with their private physician. If your doctor or clinic does not have flu vaccine available, call the Health Care Agency’s Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 for assistance.

To help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses, Orange County residents are urged to:

- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash their hands with soap and warm water or a hand sanitizer to help protect themselves from germs.
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay healthy by eating nutritious foods, drinking plenty of water, exercising, getting plenty of rest and not smoking.
- Stay home when they are sick to avoid infecting their co-workers and friends.
For Immediate Release
February 2, 2005

Information About The Mental Health Services Act To Be Offered at Meeting in Laguna Hills

(Laguna Hills) – The public is invited to learn more about Proposition 63, The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), at a community meeting in Laguna Hills, to be held Thursday, February 3rd from 4-6 p.m. in Conference Room One (Basement) at Saddleback Memorial Medical Center, 24451 Health Center Drive.

The Proposition 63 Community Meeting is an opportunity to discuss MHSA guidelines and outline a proposed planning process that will allow maximum participation by mental health consumers, families, providers, key agency partners, advocates and other stakeholders. One of the key elements will be the development of a MHSA Steering Committee and a number of working groups that will focus on individual parts of the initiative. Among those participating in the meeting will be Maureen Kochen, RN, County Mental Health Board Chairman; and Mark Refowitz, Health Care Agency Deputy Agency Director for Behavioral Health Services.

Proposition 63 was approved by California voters in November 2004 and became law on January 1, 2005, providing a unique opportunity to transform the public mental health system in Orange County. Through the Mental Health Services Act, local counties will receive funding to expand mental health services and develop innovative programs for mentally ill children, adults and older adults.

Free parking will be available in the visitor section of the Medical Center parking lot and light refreshments will be provided.

# # #
For Immediate Release
February 4, 2005

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Fullerton Residents Encouraged to Learn More About the Mental Health Services Act

(Fullerton) – Information about a unique opportunity to transform the public mental health system in Orange County will be provided to Fullerton residents at a public meeting to be held Monday, February 28 from 3-5 p.m. in Room B at the Fullerton Public Library, 353 W. Commonwealth.

The Proposition 63 Public Meeting will offer information about the State’s Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), which will provide funding to counties for expansion of mental health services and the development of innovative programs for mentally ill children, adults and older adults.

During the meeting, MHSA guidelines will be discussed and a proposed planning process that will allow maximum participation by mental health consumers, families, providers, key agency partners, advocates and other stakeholders will be outlined. One of the key elements will be the development of a MHSA Review Committee and a number of working groups that will focus on individual parts of the initiative. Those attending the meeting will be encouraged to participate in the planning process.

Proposition 63 was approved by California voters in November 2004 and became law on January 1, 2005.
West Nile Virus Prevention Begins In Your Backyard

(Santa Ana) – Southern California’s recent rains have many health experts concerned about the potential for an early start to West Nile Virus (WNV) activity in 2005, and Orange County residents are encouraged to do their part in the effort to slow the spread of WNV.

“After each storm, everyone should look for areas of standing water around their homes and dump out even small amounts of water in which mosquitoes may breed,” said County Health Officer Mark B. Horton, M.D. Residential backyards are a common breeding place for mosquitoes, so individuals can make a major difference in helping to control WNV just by eliminating standing water.

While there have not been any confirmed human WNV cases in Orange County this year, one human case has already been reported in Los Angeles County. Orange County Vector Control District officials have detected the first signs of WNV activity in birds this year and say WNV remained active in the county all winter, though at far lower levels than last summer. California had the highest number of human WNV infections in the nation last year, with 829 cases, including 27 deaths. Orange County had the fourth highest total of WNV cases in the state, with 64 confirmed human infections and four deaths attributed to the virus. While it is not possible to predict how many WNV cases will occur this year, public health officials are concerned that abundant rainfall may result in higher mosquito counts and the possibility of a large number of human cases of the mosquito-borne illness.

Additional recommended precautions include:

- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition in order to keep mosquitoes out of your home
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors, especially at dusk and dawn.

More information about West Nile Virus is available on the Health Care Agency’s website at www.ochealthinfo.com, with information about mosquito control available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org.
Red Carpet Premiere Showcases Student Anti-Tobacco Public Service Announcements

WHAT:
A “RED CARPET” event will take place in the City of Santa Ana to showcase two tobacco-free Public Service Announcements (PSAs) created by youth attending Orange County High School of the Arts. The students’ winning PSA scripts were chosen among several entries in the Health Care Agency’s Tobacco Use Prevention Program’s (TUPP) “Tune Out Tobacco” PSA workshop project as best in countering the positive portrayal of tobacco in the media.

WHEN: Thursday, February 24 at 11:50 a.m.

WHERE: Orange County High School of the Arts
1010 N. Main Street, Santa Ana, CA 92701

WHO: Authors of the winning PSAs, students and administrators from Orange County High School of the Arts, and local community members will be on hand to support the premiere of the PSAs.

WHY: Every day, more than 3,000 young people under the age of 18 begin to smoke. The “Tune Out Tobacco” PSA workshop project is aimed at countering the positive portrayal of tobacco in movies, television, billboards, magazines and store advertising. For more information, please call the Health Care Agency’s TUPP program at (714) 541-1444.
Travelers Returning From Certain Asian Nations Encouraged to Monitor Their Health

(Santa Ana) – The celebration of the Lunar New Year results in increased travel between the United States and many Asian countries, including those in which cases of avian influenza A (H5N1), or bird flu, have been reported. Because many travelers will soon be returning to the United States, the Orange County Health Care Agency has joined with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in urging returning travelers to monitor their health for at least ten days after the completion of their trip.

As of February 17, 2005, 55 human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1) had been reported in Vietnam (37), Thailand (17) and Cambodia (1), resulting in 42 deaths since January 2004. Avian influenza A (H5N1) is a viral infection that usually affects wild birds but can infect and cause serious disease among poultry, such as chickens. While it is unusual for humans to get influenza virus infections directly from poultry or wild birds, a number of human infections and outbreaks caused by certain avian influenza A viruses have been documented. H5N1 infections in humans can cause serious disease and death, and no human vaccine exists to prevent infection.

During the ten-day period after returning to the U.S., travelers are encouraged to monitor their health for any symptoms of illness. Should a traveler returning from Vietnam, Thailand or Cambodia become ill with fever, difficulty breathing, or cough during this period, they should contact their health care provider. Before visiting a doctor’s office, clinic, emergency room or other health care facility, the traveler should inform the provider of their symptoms and recent travel to an area in which avian influenza has been reported. Physicians treating individuals with respiratory symptoms that have traveled to these areas and returned to Orange County should contact Public Health immediately at (714) 834-8180 for appropriate testing.
For Immediate Release
March 4, 2005

Bat Found At Huntington Beach Home Depot Store Tests Positive For Rabies

(Santa Ana) – Anyone who may have come into contact on March 1st with a bat found at the Home Depot store, 7100 Warner Avenue, Huntington Beach, is asked to call the Orange County Health Care Agency, following tests that showed the bat was infected with rabies.

“The bat was found on March 1st about 7:30 p.m. just inside the store from the outdoor garden area of the Huntington Beach Home Depot location. We are very fortunate that employees of the store did not make contact with the bat,” said Dr. Hildy Meyers, Public Health Epidemiology Medical Director. The bat was picked up from the store by Animal Care Officers and the rabies test results became available Friday morning.

“We want to exercise the utmost in caution by asking anyone who may have come into contact with the bat at the Home Depot store, 7100 Warner Avenue, Huntington Beach, on March 1st to call Orange County Animal Care Services at (714) 935-6106 between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., for additional information,” Dr. Meyers said. This phone line is typically answered Monday through Friday, but will be staffed on Saturday, March 5 and Sunday, March 6 to receive inquiries. Parents who brought their children with them to the store on the evening of March 1st should specifically ask their children about seeing or touching a bat.

Human rabies cases are very rare but can result if a person is bitten by a rabid animal. Medical assistance should be obtained as soon as possible after an exposure so any wound can be cleaned and preventive treatment called post-exposure prophylaxis can be started. This treatment is safe and effective. Most bats do not have rabies, but to minimize the risk, it is best never to handle any bat or wild animal.

# # #
For Immediate Release  
March 11, 2005

**Orange County Restaurant Inspection Information Now Available Online**

(Santa Ana) - On March 11, 2005 the Orange County Health Care Agency, Environmental Health will launch an enhanced website that will provide the public with inspection violation information on all restaurants operating in Orange County. The new website addition will be available through the Food Protection Program’s current web address at [www.ocfoodinfo.com](http://www.ocfoodinfo.com).

The new feature allows the public to search for their favorite restaurant and view inspection history and any violations found during inspections. Restaurant closures and Award of Excellence recipients are already available online as part of the Food Protection Program's Public Notification System. The new enhancement provides additional useful information to the dining public to assist them in making informed choices.

To find out more about the new inspection information feature or the Orange County Food Protection Program, please visit our web site at [www.ocfoodinfo.com](http://www.ocfoodinfo.com) or call (714) 433-6000.

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For Immediate Release
April 4, 2005

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Orange County Posts Gains In Health Status

(Santa Ana) - Orange County residents continue to make progress on several key indicators of health, according to the annual report card on the health of Californians issued by the State Department of Health Services.

“Improvements in breastfeeding rates, gains in early pre-natal care and a decrease in the teen birth rate continue trends we’ve seen in recent years,” said Mark B. Horton, M.D., Orange County’s Health Officer. “The latest County Health Status Report also shows continuing decreases in the incidence of new AIDS and Tuberculosis cases.”

The report, based on information from 2001-2003 shows that Orange County has already achieved the national Healthy People 2010 objectives for breastfeeding initiation, receiving pre-natal care during the first trimester of pregnancy, and for reducing death rates due to motor vehicle accidents, homicide and lung cancer. Slight increases were noted in the infant mortality rate and the percentage of low birthweight babies. “While our rates in these areas are still better than the statewide average, this should be an area of emphasis for the health care community,” Dr. Horton said.

Deaths in Orange County from coronary heart disease and cerebrovascular diseases remain higher than the statewide average. “By leading healthier lifestyles, Orange County residents can help to reduce deaths from these diseases, which are associated with lifestyle factors like tobacco use, alcohol consumption, diet and exercise,” said Dr. Horton.

The 2005 County Health Status Profiles are produced by the California Department of Health Services and the California Conference of Local Health Officers. The full report will be available on-line at www.dhs.ca.gov/hisp/chs/phweek/CProfile2005/CProfile2005.htm.

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Orange County Responds to Obesity with Regional Collaborative Efforts

(Santa Ana) - The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) recently announced that physical inactivity, obesity, and overweight costs California $21.7 billion a year in direct and indirect medical care ($10.2 billion), workers’ compensation ($338 million), and lost productivity ($11.2 billion). The report, *The Economic Costs of Physical Inactivity, Obesity, and Overweight in California Adults: Health Care, Workers’ Compensation, and Lost Productivity*, estimated the annual costs of physical inactivity at $13.3 billion, obesity at $6.4 billion, and overweight at $2.0 billion. (*The Economic Costs of Physical Inactivity, Obesity and Overweight in California Adults* is available online at [www.ca5aday.com](http://www.ca5aday.com).)

About three-quarters of the costs were found to be shouldered by public and private employers in the forms of health insurance and lost work productivity. The report projected that costs would reach $28 billion in 2005 if population trends and rising health care costs continued. This is the first such research conducted for California.

“The cost is staggering. The implications these numbers have on Orange County is very significant,” said Mark Horton, Orange County Public Health Officer. “Everyone needs to have access to healthy food and opportunities to engage in physical activity at the worksite and in their communities. This is vital for our community’s health, and for our economy.”

In Orange County, special efforts are being made to address the growing number of overweight children, tomorrow’s workforce. Orange County brought together community leaders, business leaders, policymakers, city planners, and educational institutions to address the growing obesity crisis. Orange County Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative (NuPAC) members are working together to improve policies and the environment so that it is easier for Orange County residents to make healthy eating and physical activity choices.

NuPAC members, representing over 75 organizations, have been able to coordinate their efforts to aid local groups in providing education, implementing campaigns and successfully applying for funds to support additional projects. Last year, NuPAC co-sponsored the California Elected Women’s Association for Education and Research forum and provided presentations at multiple events. Information was shared with mayors, school superintendents and other policymakers. Additional work focused on bringing Farmers’ Markets to low-income areas and encouraging schools to use the CDC’s School Health Index, to assess their environment. Priority areas for the future include improving access to healthy...
foods, walkable communities and workplace wellness. NuPAC has plans to share today’s obesity report with leading businesses in Orange County.

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Dedication Event Celebrates Kick Butts Day and National Library Week 2005

(Buena Park) – To celebrate Kick Butts Day (KBD) on April 13 and National Library Week April 11-16, the Orange County Health Care Agency’s Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) and the Buena Park Library will partner to host a dedication event on April 11 from 7 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. at the Buena Park library auditorium located at 7150 La Palma Ave. in Buena Park.

The event will highlight the dedication of a bookmark promoting a tobacco-free lifestyle for Orange County youth and showcase more than 20 pieces of artwork created by OC youth, which depicts messages developed to prevent children from starting tobacco use. The event will also encourage youth to learn more about the exciting resources available at their local library.

The bookmark design and artwork were created by youth from various community groups, middle schools and high schools in Orange County through their participation in TUPP’s “Tune Out Tobacco” project, which assists youth in grades 6 through 12 in countering the positive portrayal of tobacco in movies, television, billboards, magazines and store advertising.

The TUPP program works to reduce tobacco use and exposure to environmental tobacco smoke in Orange County by working with local community agencies and organizations. TUPP provides services to Orange County residents through its youth, community service and public policy programs. For more information, please call the TUPP program at (714) 541-1444 or visit www.ochealthinfo.com/tupp.

To learn more about Kick Butts Day, a nationwide initiative that makes kids leaders in the effort to stop tobacco use, visit www.kickbuttsday.org.

Celebrated annually, National Library Week is a time to celebrate the positive contributions of libraries. For more information, visit the American Library Association online at www.ala.org.

###
Mental Health Services Act Training Workshops Begin

(Santa Ana) – The transformation of Orange County’s public mental health system moves forward in April with a series of Training Workshops that are key to the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) planning process.

“We are excited that over 400 people have already applied to participate on MHSA workgroups,” said Mark Refowitz, County Mental Health Director. “These training workshops will ensure that everyone participating in the planning process has the same basic level of knowledge about the mental health system as we begin this important work.”

The workshops will be held:

- Monday, April 11 from 8 a.m.-12 Noon
  Fountain Valley Recreation Center - Social Hall A/B
  16400 Brookhurst St., Fountain Valley, CA 92708

- Friday, April 15 from 4:30-8:30 p.m.
  Orange County Hall of Administration Board Hearing Room
  10 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701

- Saturday, April 16 from 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
  Orange Senior Center
  170 South Olive, Orange, CA 92866

- Monday, April 18 from 1-5 p.m.
  Laguna Beach United Methodist Church
  21632 Wesley Drive, Laguna Beach, CA 92651

- Friday, April 22 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
  Fullerton Public Library
  353 W. Commonwealth Ave, Fullerton, CA 92832

Mental health professionals, consumers, family members and others interested in participating in the MHSA planning process are asked to register for a workshop on the Health Care Agency Internet site at www.ochealthinfo.com/prop63/rsvp or by calling (714) 834-6023. Consumers and family members may request translation services and assistance with childcare and transportation when making their reservations. Continuing education credits will be offered to physicians, nurses and certain other licensed professionals.
completing the training.

The Mental Health Services Act, also known as Proposition 63, was approved by California voters in November 2004 and became law on January 1, 2005. Through the Mental Health Services Act, Orange County is expected to receive millions of dollars in funding to expand mental health services and develop innovative programs for mentally ill children, adults and older adults.
For Immediate Release
April 8, 2005

Brea Emergency Room Services Shifted to Surrounding Hospitals

Due to the closure and bankruptcy of Brea Community Hospital and its emergency room, the Orange County Health Care Agency advises the public of alternative sources of care. Persons with a life-threatening emergency who call 911 will be taken to the closest, appropriate emergency room by paramedics.

Patients who need medical care should check with their physician or health care provider for advice about on the most appropriate facility. For hospital emergency services, hospitals located in the surrounding area include: St. Jude Medical Center, 101 E. Valencia Mesa Drive, Fullerton; Placentia-Linda Community Hospital, 1301 N. Rose Drive, Placentia; and Whittier Hospital Medical Center, 9080 Colima Road, Whittier.

# # #
For Immediate Release
April 25, 2005

Foodborne Illness Reporting Hotline Available

The Orange County Health Care Agency, Environmental Health has a hotline telephone number available for the public to report suspected cases of foodborne illness. The hotline number is (714) 433-6000.

This feature allows the public to report suspected cases of foodborne illness seven days a week and is available 24-hours a day. Environmental Health staff work with the public to gather information on the types of foods consumed, symptoms, and the name and address of the restaurant. Environmental Health staff will use the information to conduct an investigation at the restaurant where the alleged foodborne illness occurred and also identify the possible cause. Environmental Health staff educates owners and operators of restaurants on how to prevent foodborne illness occurrences.

The telephone number provides an opportunity for the public to report a possible foodborne illness as soon as symptoms occur. Please call Environmental Health at (714) 433-6000 to report a foodborne illness.

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Contact: Patricia Gentry (714) 433-6012
(Santa Ana) The Orange County Health Care Agency reminds consumers that the Annual Mussel Quarantine in California will take effect on May 1st and will continue through October 31st, 2005. Sport harvesting of mussels for human consumption is prohibited along the entire California coastline. All bays and inlets are included in the quarantine. The purpose of this quarantine is to protect the public from deadly poisons that may be present in bivalve mollusks, such as mussels, clams, oysters and scallops. Between 1927 and 2004, California recorded 521 cases of Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning, including 32 deaths.

The greatest hazard is poisoning from mussels because they develop high levels of toxin more quickly than other mollusks and are eaten whole without removal of digestive organs. All dark parts should be removed from clams, oysters and scallops before eating, since the poison may be concentrated in those areas. Health officials emphasize that toxic mussels cannot be distinguished from harmless ones. Moreover, cooking does not destroy the toxins, as they are relatively heat resistant.

The California quarantine applies only to mussels collected locally by sports harvesters. All commercial shellfish harvesters in California must be certified by the State and are subject to strict testing requirements.

The safest guideline to follow is: Do not eat mussels from California coastal waters collected by sports harvesters until after October 31.
Community Meeting Addresses Alcohol and Drug Issues

(Santa Ana) – To hear public concerns and suggestions for alcohol and drug treatment or prevention services in Orange County, the public is invited to attend a community meeting scheduled to take place on Wednesday, May 18 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Hall of Administration, Board of Supervisors Hearing Room located at 10 Civic Center Plaza in Santa Ana.

This event is sponsored by the Orange County Alcohol & Drug Advisory Board. The meeting will provide an open forum for consumers, family members, providers and interested community members to voice their thoughts, concerns and/or pose questions about alcohol and drug services in the County.

“We hope that consumers, family members and others interested in alcohol and drug abuse services will take this opportunity to share their ideas and concerns with us, “ said Mark Refowitz, Health Care Agency Deputy Director for Behavioral Health Services. “This community meeting will help us identify opportunities to better serve the people of Orange County.”

The event is open at no cost to all community members interested in providing comments and suggestions regarding alcohol and drug services in the County. For more information about the community meeting, please call (714) 834-5481.
For Immediate Release
May 5, 2005

Animal Care Center Hosts 17th Annual Pet Fair

(Orange) – In recognition of the American Humane Association’s “Be Kind to Animals” week, Orange County Animal Care Center will be hosting its 17th Annual Pet Fair on Saturday, May 7, 2005, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at its facility located at 561 The City Drive South, Orange. The event will showcase hundreds of beautiful animals available for adoption. Last year, the Center was able to place 30 dogs and 42 cats into new homes.

In addition to the many wonderful animals available for adoption, a variety of wildlife and exotic exhibits, pet product vendors, breed rescue groups, animal emergency first aid along with working dog demonstrations and plenty of free samples. Explorer Post 538 will sell refreshments. The Animal Assistance League will be sponsoring opportunity drawings throughout the day with many fabulous items. The staff and volunteers of the Center would like to invite you to be a part of the festivities. Putting your best paw forward will help make this event a success.

“We encourage animal lovers of all ages to join the celebration,” said Jennifer Phillips, Director of the Animal Care Center. “Pet Fair gives us the opportunity to welcome the community, increase awareness on responsible pet ownership, promote our volunteer program, and of course, place many animals into new loving homes.”

# # #
For Immediate Release
May 18, 2005

Contact: Dr. Bruce Haynes
(714) 834-3500

St. Joseph Hospital Joins New System Of Cardiovascular Receiving Centers

(Orange) – St. Joseph Hospital in the City of Orange is the 11th hospital to join the new system of cardiovascular receiving centers in Orange County, according to Orange County Emergency Medical Services. Effective May 17, 2005, St. Joseph’s will receive patients suffering heart attacks identified by electrocardiograms (EKGs) done in the field by paramedics.

“St. Joseph is an important addition to our system of hospitals providing advanced treatments such as angioplasty to heart attack victims in Orange County,” said Dr. Bruce Haynes, Medical Director of Orange County Emergency Medical Services.

St. Joseph joins a network of new cardiovascular receiving centers countywide to speed advanced treatments such as angioplasty to heart attack victims. This new network will provide immediate access to treatments in cardiac catheterization units, and is expected to greatly reduce the time to treatment.

The network of Orange County hospitals currently listed as a cardiovascular receiving center include Anaheim Memorial Medical Center, Fountain Valley Regional Hospital and Medical Center, Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian, Irvine Regional Hospital, Los Alamitos Medical Center, Mission Hospital, Saddleback Memorial Hospital, St. Jude Medical Center, UCI Medical Center and Western Medical Center – Santa Ana.

# # #
Recreational Water Quality Important To Summer Health And Safety

(Santa Ana) - Orange County residents and visitors will be heading to public beaches and swimming pools this Memorial Day holiday during the first national observance of Recreational Water Illness Prevention Week, May 23-30.

“Enhancing the quality of Orange County’s recreational waters is important to the health of all Orange County residents,” said Dr. Margaret Beed, Orange County Health Care Agency Chief Medical Officer. “Taking a few simple precautions will increase everyone’s enjoyment of summertime visits to swimming pools and beaches.”

Recreational water illnesses can be spread by swallowing or having contact with contaminated water from swimming pools, spas, lakes, rivers, bays and harbors and the ocean. These illnesses can cause a wide variety of symptoms, including gastrointestinal, skin, ear, respiratory, eye and wound infections.

When visiting the beach or a swimming pool, follow these healthy swimming behaviors:

1. If you or your children have diarrhea, don’t swim! You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick.
2. Don’t swallow pool or ocean water.
3. Practice good hygiene. Shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
4. Take children on bathroom breaks or change diapers often. Waiting until you hear “I have to go!” may mean that it’s too late.
5. Change diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside. Germs can spread to surfaces and objects in and around the pool and cause illness.

For more information regarding Recreational Water Illnesses and Healthy Swimming, visit www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming. For current information on ocean and bay postings and closures in Orange County, visit www.ocbeachinfo.com or call (714) 433-6400.

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West Nile Virus Precautions Urged For Holiday Weekend Events

(Santa Ana) – Memorial Day marks the traditional start of the Summer season, and public health officials are concerned that this year it may also mark the start of the West Nile Virus season in Southern California.

“West Nile Virus (WNV) had an early start in birds and mosquitoes this year, and that could mean an early start to infections in people” said Dr. Mark Horton, County Health Officer. “If you’re going to enjoy outdoor activities this holiday weekend, take along your insect repellent and don’t forget to use it.”

Last year, 830 human cases of WNV infection were reported in California, including 64 in Orange County. There were 28 WNV-related deaths in California, including four in Orange County. Since human cases were confirmed beginning in the month of June last year, public health officials believe it is only a matter of days before the first cases of 2005 are detected.

In spite of the health threat posed by WNV, nearly two-thirds (64%) of Californians responding to a recent survey said they did not take any precautions against mosquito bites last year, and less than 20% reported using an insect repellent that contained DEET. This year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has included two additional types of insect repellents to DEET on the list of those considered to give effective protection against the mosquitoes that transmit WNV. Oil of lemon eucalyptus is as effective as low concentrations of DEET in protecting against mosquitoes and is now available for use by consumers in California. The other product, picaridin, is not expected to be available in California this summer. Around your home, WNV prevention recommendations include eliminating any standing water from your property to reduce mosquito breeding and making sure your window and door screens are in good condition to keep mosquitoes outside.

Most people who become infected with WNV do not experience symptoms or become ill, but about 20% of those with WNV infection may have fever, headache, body aches, rash, or other mild to moderate symptoms. About one out of every 150 people infected with WNV may develop a more severe form of the illness and adults over 50 years of age are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection. Anyone who develops symptoms such as high fever, confusion, muscle weakness, severe headaches or stiff neck should seek medical care immediately. More information about West Nile Virus is available on the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com/epi/wnv.

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Summer’s Here – So Is West Nile Virus!

(Santa Ana) – The longer days and warmer temperatures associated with the arrival of Summer have been accompanied by two main indicators of West Nile Virus activity in Orange County, meaning the first human illnesses associated with the virus are probably just around the corner.

“There has been a recent increase in the detection of West Nile Virus (WNV) in dead birds and mosquitoes in Orange County,” said Dr. Mark Horton, County Health Officer. “Based on previous experience, we believe that human cases will be reported very soon, but we want to remind the public it is never too late to help prevent West Nile Virus cases.”

WNV has been detected in dead birds found in at least 13 Orange County communities this year, while mosquito pools from Garden Grove, Huntington Beach, Irvine, Santa Ana and Seal Beach have also tested positive. The virus is expected to be found again this year in all regions of the county.

Since a high percentage of mosquitoes breed on private property, Orange County residents are encouraged to dump out any standing water around their homes and businesses and to check their property each week for any new collection of standing water due to sprinklers or other water sources. Other key prevention measures include:

- Using insect repellents containing DEET, Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. Always read and follow label directions!
- Making sure doors and windows have tight fitting screens to keep mosquitoes out of your home.

Last year, 830 human cases of WNV infection were reported in California, including 64 in Orange County. There were 28 WNV-related deaths in California, including four in Orange County. While no human WNV cases have been reported in California this year, the nation’s first human WNV case of 2005 has recently been reported in Kansas.

Most people who become infected with WNV do not experience symptoms or become ill, but about 20% of those with WNV infection may have fever, headache, body aches, fatigue, rash, or other mild to moderate symptoms. About one out of every 150 people infected with WNV may develop a more severe form of the illness and adults over 50 years of age are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection. More information about West Nile Virus is available on the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com/epi/wnv.
For Immediate Release
July 8, 2005

Town Hall Meeting Discusses Traditional Foods Project

(Santa Ana) – The Health Care Agency will be holding a Town Hall meeting with Vietnamese community leaders and restaurant owners on July 13, 2005 from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Westminster Community Services & Recreation Center, 8200 Westminster Blvd, Westminster, to share information about a new project known as the Traditional Foods Project. This project adopted an exciting and new way of encouraging the Fresh is Best concept among food preparers within the Vietnamese community.

The project started in September 2003 with local Vietnamese restaurant and market owners coming together with community leaders, health educators, academia, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and the Health Care Agency to find creative solutions to food safety issues within the community. A major goal of this Partnership Committee was to make improvements in food safety without compromising the food’s taste or quality for consumers. The Committee reviewed the characteristics of the traditional Vietnamese foods, identified specific foods for laboratory analysis, and modeled food storage and handling procedures on guidance provided in state health laws. The result is that using time limits on food storage vastly improves the safety of foods.

The Traditional Foods Project is a voluntary program that is a great benefit to the community because the public is assured that participating retailers are providing the safest prepared foods possible. The Town Hall meeting on July 13, 2005 will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about this innovative new project and to hear from local community leaders.

For more information about the Traditional Foods Project and the Town Hall meeting, please call Patricia Gentry at (714) 433-6012.

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Orange County’s First Human West Nile Virus Case of 2005 Confirmed

(Santa Ana) – A 35 year old Laguna Niguel woman has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV) infection, becoming the first confirmed human WNV case in the county during 2005, according to County Health Officer Mark B. Horton, M.D.

The woman became ill during the first week in July. She was not hospitalized and is continuing to recover from the illness, which was consistent with West Nile Fever. It is not known exactly where the individual was exposed to West Nile virus, as she had traveled to other areas of California where the virus has been detected this year. At least 32 human cases of WNV infection have been reported in California this year.

“Based on last year’s experience, we may be moving into a peak period for West Nile virus cases in Orange County,” said County Health Officer Dr. Mark B. Horton. “We are pleased that this individual is recovering, but we are also very concerned that many more cases may occur in Orange County this summer. All Orange County residents should take a few simple precautions to prevent WNV infection, like emptying all standing water on their property to reduce the areas in which mosquitoes may breed.”

Other recommended precautions include:

- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

Last year, 64 confirmed cases of West Nile virus infection were reported in Orange County, with four deaths attributed to the virus. In 2004, the first human case of West Nile infection in Orange County was confirmed on July 21st. Statewide, 830 WNV cases were reported in 2004, with 28 WNV-related deaths.

Most people who become infected with West Nile virus (WNV) do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile virus will experience symptoms of West Nile fever, which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as a high fever, severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. Adults over 50 years of age
are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

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West Nile Virus Case Total Reaches Three – Study Shows Prevention Reduces West Nile Risk

(Santa Ana) – Orange County has now recorded three human cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) infection during 2005. While the new cases indicate continued WNV activity in Orange County, a recently released study shows that commonly recommended precautions are effective in reducing a person’s risk of WNV infection.

The latest cases recorded are:

- A 50-year-old Anaheim woman who began experiencing symptoms of WNV infection in mid-July. After being hospitalized for treatment, she is now recovering at home.
- A 69-year-old Brea man who began experiencing symptoms of WNV infection in late July. The man continues his recovery after being discharged from the hospital.

The effectiveness of personal precautions against WNV infection are detailed in a study to be included in the September 2005 edition of the journal Emerging Infectious Diseases, published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The study showed that practicing two or more of the recommended personal protective measures reduced an individuals’ risk of WNV infection by 50%. Among recommended personal precautions are:

- Using insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

Orange County residents are also urged to empty all standing water on their property and make sure that window and door screens are in good condition.

The statewide total of WNV cases has risen to 118, with three deaths in California attributed to WNV infection. Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus will experience symptoms of West Nile fever, which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as a high fever, severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. Adults
over 50 years of age are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection. Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

# # #
Disaster Ready Conference Prepares Emergency Workers for Collaboration During a Disaster

Local, regional and national emergency responders will join together to attend the two-day Disaster Ready Conference on August 25 – 26 at the Hyatt Regency Orange County in Garden Grove. This information-packed conference will stress that during a local disaster, each nurse, paramedic, law enforcement officer, firefighter, public works staff, public health worker, behavioral health specialist, emergency manager, city, county and state emergency planner contributes to the emergency response puzzle.

Speakers at the conference presented by the Orange County Health Care Agency will include Ed Buikema, Director, Response Division, Emergency Preparedness and Response Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency; Dennis Miletti, Professor Emeritus, University of Colorado at Boulder and “Disaster by Design” author; and Erroll Southers, Deputy Director, Office of Homeland Security, Office of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Joining the speakers at the conference are Congressman Edward Royce, Congressman Daryl Issa, Orange County Sheriff Michael Carona, City of Garden Grove Mayor Bill Dalton, and Orange County Fire Authority Chief Chip Prather.

Complete information about the conference and registration is available at www.ocready.com/disasterreadyconf.
For Immediate Release
August 25, 2005

Orange County Reports Fifth West Nile Virus Case For 2005

(Santa Ana) – Orange County’s total of West Nile Virus cases now stands at five, while at least 300 human cases have been reported statewide.

The latest confirmed case is a 49-year-old Irvine woman who developed symptoms consistent with West Nile Fever in early August. The individual did not require hospitalization and is continuing to recover from the infection.

“We have been very fortunate to have a lower number of West Nile Virus illnesses this year as compared to 2004,” said County Health Officer Dr. Mark Horton. “However, Orange County residents should continue to take precautions against mosquito bites, because West Nile Virus remains active in our area and the season is far from over.”

Among recommended personal precautions against mosquito bites are:

- Using insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce mosquito breeding
- Making sure your door and window screens are in good condition
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus will experience symptoms of West Nile fever, which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as a high fever, severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. Adults over 50 years of age are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

# # #
Santa Ana Kids “Energize And Mobilize” To Take Action Against Obesity

WHAT: Youth from Jerome Recreational Center’s after school program will participate in “Energize and Mobilize” a health-related outreach event designed to take action against childhood obesity and to celebrate National “5 a Day” month in September. The event will educate youth about eating the appropriate servings of fruits and vegetables and getting at least 60 minutes of physical activity everyday. Youth will take part in various activities including food demonstrations, obstacle courses, relays and bean bag games.

WHEN: Friday, September 23 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

WHERE: Jerome Recreational Center
726 S. Center St., Santa Ana, CA 92704

WHO: Youth and program staff from Jerome Recreational Center’s after school program will be on hand to participate in “Energize and Mobilize.”

WHY: About 1 in 5 Orange County children from low-income families is overweight. Children who are overweight have a higher probability of carrying excess weight into adulthood. The Orange County Health Care Agency’s Nutrition Services Program works with the community to enact changes that support healthy eating and physical activity. For more information about the Nutrition Services program, call (714) 834-7877 or visit www.ochealthinfo.com/public/nutrition/list.htm.

# # #
For Immediate Release
September 27, 2005

Contact: Dorothy Hendrickson
(714) 834-5481

Public Invited To Attend Final Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Steering Committee Meeting

(Santa Ana) – The process of implementing Proposition 63 – The Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) in Orange County has reached a pivotal point, and the public is invited to attend the final MHSA Steering Committee meeting on Wednesday, September 28th, from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the Delhi Center, 505 East Central Avenue, Santa Ana.

“I hope that all Steering Committee members and the many interested members of the public who have participated in the MHSA public input process will make the time to attend this important meeting,” said Dorothy Hendrickson, MHSA Administrator. “Participation in this final Steering Committee meeting is vital to the success of this important project.”

The final Steering Committee meeting is an important milestone in Orange County’s effort to submit a three-year Community Services and Supports Plan to the State Department of Mental Health (DMH) by the end of December 2005. It is anticipated that this will be the final Steering Committee meeting prior to beginning work on the draft plan required by DMH.

Steering Committee members should note the meeting is now scheduled for 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Refreshments and lunch will be provided. For more information about the meeting, contact the MHSA Office at (714) 834-2907.

# # #
Orange County Reports Season’s First Influenza Cases – Flu Shots Now Available

(Santa Ana) – The influenza season is underway in Orange County, with two confirmed cases of influenza reported to the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) in recent days.

“Both of these cases were Influenza Type A, which is often the predominant strain of influenza reported in the United States,” said Dr. Mark Horton, County Public Health Officer. “One of the cases was an older adult, while the other was an infant. These are two of the groups that we are most concerned about when it comes to the potential complications of influenza, so we urge everyone in the high-risk groups, their caregivers and close contacts to get a flu shot this year.”

This year, the nation’s flu shot supply is expected to be sufficient to meet demand. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has requested that between October 1 – 23, only those in the highest priority groups be given flu shots. Beginning October 24, physicians may give flu shots to the remainder of the priority groups and anyone else who wants one. The highest priority groups include:

- People 65 years of age and older
- People with chronic diseases like heart disease, asthma, other lung disease or diabetes
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- People with a health condition that suppresses their immune system
- Pregnant women
- Children 6-23 months of age
- Health care personnel who provide direct patient care
- Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age

The CDC also recommends annual flu shots for household contacts of children and adults at increased risk for complications from influenza. Flu shots are available from private physicians; pharmacies and other retail businesses in the community; and, for eligible individuals, through the County’s annual influenza vaccination program, which is now underway. Information about locations and dates for the County’s flu shot program is
available by calling the **HCA Health Referral Line at 1-800-564-8448** or on our website at [www.ochealthinfo.com/public/flu/](http://www.ochealthinfo.com/public/flu/).
ACS Alerts Owners To Monitor Pets For Canine Influenza Signs And Symptoms

(Orange) – Orange County Animal Care Services (ACS) alerts pet owners to monitor their pets for any signs of respiratory infection due to recent reports of a new emerging canine respiratory disease known as canine influenza virus or canine flu.

Canine flu can mimic symptoms of kennel cough, but is more serious and generally requires the attention of a veterinarian. Symptoms include a persistent cough, nasal discharge and sometimes fever and listlessness. While most dogs that contract the disease experience what is regarded as the milder form of canine flu, some may develop a more severe form of the disease which includes signs of pneumonia, such as a high fever and increased respiratory rate and effort.

The virus is spread through the air from respiratory discharge, and from contaminated objects such as dog toys and water bowls. It is advised that pet owners should not allow dogs to share toys and food/water bowls, and to use precaution when taking pets to dog parks as they may be exposed to other dogs that may be carriers of the virus.

Because canine flu is a newly-emerging disease, all dogs, regardless of breed or age, are susceptible to infection. With no available vaccine for canine flu, it’s important to monitor your pet’s health and look for signs and symptoms of respiratory infection.

If you suspect your pet has canine flu, contact your veterinarian immediately. If treated early, most forms of the disease can be averted.

# # #
For Immediate Release
October 17, 2005

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Orange County Health Officer Selected To Lead State’s Public Health Efforts

(Santa Ana) – Orange County Health Officer Mark B. Horton, M.D., MSPH, has been appointed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to the position of State Public Health Officer, effective November 7, 2005.

“Serving the people of Orange County has been an honor and a pleasure, and a truly enriching experience for me professionally,” Dr. Horton commented. “I have greatly appreciated the support of the Board of Supervisors, our Agency director Julie Poulson, and the wonderful staff and members of the community I’ve had the privilege to work with. I look forward to continuing to work with them as I face new challenges as State Public Health Officer.”

Dr. Horton has served as County Health Officer and Deputy Agency Director for Public Health Services with the Orange County Health Care Agency since September 1999. Before coming to Orange County, Dr. Horton had previously served as the Director of the Nebraska Department of Health.

“Dr. Horton is a visionary in the field of Public Health and this is an outstanding move for the State of California,” said Julie Poulson, Director of the Health Care Agency. “Dr. Horton has provided excellent leadership to the Health Care Agency over the past six years, a period during which we have faced the challenges of bioterrorism preparation, the arrival of West Nile Virus, threats posed by other emerging diseases and the continuance of efforts to expand health insurance coverage to our community’s children. He has been wonderful for Orange County and we wish him well in this new and exciting opportunity.”

# # #
For Immediate Release
November 7, 2005

Contact: Dorothy Hendrickson
(714) 834-2907

Orange County’s Mental Health Services Act Plan Available For Public Comment

(Santa Ana) – Orange County’s Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) plan will be available beginning November 7th for a 30-day public review and comment period.

Over 90 community meetings attended by over 4,000 people have been conducted since January to gather input for the MHSA plan, which must be approved by the California Department of Mental Health before funding is received. The plan will be available beginning today at public libraries, select senior and community centers, mental health organizations and on the Internet at www.ochealthinfo.com/prop63. The public comment period concludes with an Orange County Mental Health Board meeting on Thursday, December 8th at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove. The Orange County Board of Supervisors must also approve the plan before it is submitted to the State.

The Mental Health Services Act, also known as Proposition 63, was approved by California voters in 2004 and designates funds from an additional one percent tax on incomes over one million dollars for use on mental health programs. The Orange County plan includes proposals to serve a wide range of people with serious mental illness, from children and youth to adults and older adults. For more information about Orange County’s MHSA plan, please contact the MHSA Office at (714) 834-2907.

# # #
For Immediate Release  
November 18, 2005

Simple Steps Can Prevent Foodborne Illness at Thanksgiving

(Santa Ana) – In planning for Thanksgiving and the cooking that comes with the holiday season, consumers should take precautionary steps when preparing their favorite foods in order to prevent foodborne illnesses. Popular Thanksgiving items such as poultry, dressings and gravy are foods in which bacteria may thrive.

“Enjoying foods of the season with family and friends is an important holiday tradition. Following a few simple practices during food preparation and handling will prevent foodborne illnesses from spoiling your festivities,” said Julie Poulson, Health Care Agency Director.

Bacteria such as Salmonella, Campylobacter and E. coli are the primary causes of foodborne illness in the United States. These types of bacteria grow rapidly on foods that are moist, rich in protein and held at temperatures between 41 degrees Fahrenheit and 135 degrees Fahrenheit.

To help keep foodborne illnesses from becoming a part of your Thanksgiving observance, follow these simple food preparation guidelines:

- Thaw frozen turkey inside the refrigerator on the bottom shelf in its original wrapping. Make sure that other foods are above the thawing turkey to prevent contamination. Thawing a moderate sized turkey in this manner may take one to three days. If time does not permit a gradual thaw, place the frozen unwrapped turkey in a clean shallow container and allow cool running water to flow across the surface with sufficient velocity to flush loose particles down the drain.
- Wash your hands, utensils, cutting boards and other items that have been in contact with the raw meat or poultry with soap and hot water to prevent contaminating other foods or re-contaminating the cooked turkey.
- Set the oven temperature at 325 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- Use a meat thermometer to make sure the meat and poultry are cooked all the way through. Place the thermometer into the thickest section of meat or poultry.
- Cook the whole turkey to an internal temperature of at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit. The giblets and stuffing should be cooked separately until they reach at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit. The recommended cooking time for your turkey can be obtained from instructions on the poultry wrapper, a cookbook or you can call the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Meat and Poultry Hotline at (888) 674-6854.
- Don’t let the turkey, dressing or gravy sit at room temperature for more than two hours. These foods are particularly high in protein and moisture and should be kept...
above 135 degrees Fahrenheit or below 41 degrees Fahrenheit at all times. Refrigerate leftovers promptly.
• Reheat leftovers to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit prior to serving.

The Orange County Health Care Agency’s Food Protection Program participates in the inspection of retail and wholesale food facilities to prevent foodborne illness. It also promotes the safe and sanitary preparation and service of foods. For more information about the program or to obtain guidelines for safe food preparation call (714) 433-6000 or visit www.ocfoodinfo.com.

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Influenza Activity in Orange County Increasing

(Santa Ana) – Reports received by the Orange County Health Care Agency indicate that seasonal influenza activity is increasing, resulting in an increased number of visits to doctors and hospital emergency departments for treatment of influenza-like illnesses.

“Most people recover from influenza and other viral illnesses without requiring medical attention,” said Dr. Hildy Meyers, Acting Health Officer. “However, influenza can result in serious complications for some people, including infants, older adults and those with chronic medical conditions.”

Medical attention for uncomplicated influenza is best obtained from your regular health care provider in an office setting or from an urgent care center. Visits to hospital emergency departments are usually not necessary for routine influenza, and should be avoided when possible so that emergency facilities will be available for severely ill individuals. Indications of more serious illness that might need immediate medical care include difficulty breathing, severe vomiting, excessive drowsiness, and severe weakness or lightheadedness. Complications are more likely in young children, the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions. Signs of dehydration in children include being unable to take adequate amounts of fluids, crying without tears, and urinating less often than normal.

Flu shots are still available through Orange County Public Health Clinics for people at high-risk of complications from influenza. For information about flu shots, call the Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448. Limiting the spread of influenza and other viral illnesses is also important in preserving hospital emergency room resources for those who are severely ill. To help prevent the spread of viruses:

- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Wash your hands frequently
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Don’t share eating utensils, drinking glasses or other personal items
- Stay home if you are sick or have symptoms of flu-like illness

# # #
For Immediate Release
Friday, December 23, 2005

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Flu-Like Illnesses Crowd Orange County Emergency Rooms

(Santa Ana) – Hospital emergency rooms in Orange County continue to report a high volume of patients with influenza or flu-like illnesses, leading Emergency Medical Services officials to urge those who are not seriously ill to seek care from their private physician, medical clinics or urgent care centers whenever possible so that emergency rooms are available for the most seriously ill patients.

“Many of our hospitals have been forced to divert ambulance patients to emergency rooms that are less crowded at the time,” said Greg Boswell, RN, Emergency Medical Services Program Manager. “These ambulance diversions are common at this time of the year, and the number of people seeking care in hospital emergency rooms for the flu and other respiratory illnesses is a contributing factor.”

Visits to hospital emergency departments are usually not necessary for uncomplicated influenza. However, influenza can result in serious complications for some people, including young children, older adults and those with chronic medical conditions. Symptoms of more serious illness that might need immediate medical care include difficulty breathing, prolonged vomiting, excessive drowsiness, and severe weakness or lightheadedness. Children are at a greater risk for dehydration which can result from vomiting, diarrhea, or being unable to take adequate amounts of fluids. Signs of dehydration can include crying without tears and urinating less often than normal.

To prevent spreading the flu virus to others, those with flu-like symptoms should remain home from work, school or other activities. Other ways to limit the spread of influenza include frequent hand washing with soap and water, covering your mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and getting a flu shot. For those individuals in high-risk categories, flu shots are still available through Orange County Public Health Clinics. For more information, call the Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448.

# # #
Precautions Urged For Travel Associated with Lunar New Year - Tiếng Việt

(Santa Ana) – People traveling for the Lunar New Year to countries where avian influenza A (H5N1) cases have been reported are urged to take precautions before, during and after their travel.

The celebration of the Lunar New Year results in increased travel between the United States and many Asian countries. Human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1), or bird flu, have been reported in Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, China, Cambodia and, most recently, Turkey. While there are not any restrictions on travel to these countries, certain precautions are recommended:

- Before traveling to areas where avian influenza A (H5N1) has been reported, visit the Centers for Disease Control Travelers’ Health website at www.cdc.gov/travel for current information. Make sure all of your routine and travel-related vaccinations are up to date. Pack a travel health kit containing your routine medications, basic first aid supplies and alcohol-based hand gels to clean your hands. Do not travel if you are sick.
- During travel, avoid direct contact with poultry and do not visit poultry farms or bird markets where live birds are kept. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand gels for hand cleaning when soap and water is not available. Make sure that all poultry products are thoroughly cooked before eating.
- After returning, monitor your health for 10 days. If you develop a fever plus cough, sore throat or trouble breathing, contact your physician and provide information about your symptoms, where you have traveled and if you had direct contact with poultry or with sick people. Orange County physicians treating patients with respiratory symptoms who have traveled to areas with avian influenza A (H5N1) cases in the 10 days prior to the onset of symptoms should contact Public Health immediately at (714) 834-8180 for appropriate testing.

# # #
Khuyến Trân Trọng Khi Đi Du Lịch Vào Dịp Tết Nguyên Đán - In English

(Santa Ana) – Những người đi du lịch nhân dịp Tết Nguyên Đán đến những quốc gia có những báo cáo về trường hợp xảy ra năn dịch cúm gia cầm A (H5N1) được khuyến dũ phải cân thận trước, giữa và sau chuyến đi.

Việc mừng Tết Nguyên Đán làm tăng lên sủng độ du lịch giữa Hoa Kỳ và nhiều quốc gia Á Châu. Đã có những báo cáo về trường hợp người bị mắc bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1) tại các quốc gia như Việt Nam, Thái Lan, Nam Dương, Trung Hoa, Căm Bốt và gần đây nhất là Thổ Nhĩ Kỳ. Trong lúc chưa có bất cứ lệnh cấm du lịch đến các quốc gia này, cũng đã có những lời khuyên phải cân thận như sau:


- Giữ chuen di, tránh dùng châm với gia cầm và đứng tránh việc trao chăn nuôi với gia cầm hay chở bán chim chóc gà vịt là các nơi không những loại thú này. Rửa tay thường xuyên với nước và xà phòng hay dùng loại kem rửa tay sệt chứa chất cồn ở những nơi không có sẵn nước và xà phòng. Trước khi ăn những món ăn bằng thịt chim, gà, vịt phải biết chắc các món đó đã được nấu chín.

- Sau chuyến du lịch trở về, theo dõi tình trạng sức khỏe của mình trong vòng 10 ngày. Nếu quý vị bị sốt nóng kèm ho, đau rát cổ họng hay khó thở, liên lạc với bác sĩ gia đình và cung cấp chi tiết các triệu chứng, nơi quý vị du lịch và trường hợp quý vị đã có những châm với chim chóc hay gà vịt hoặc với người đang mang bệnh. Những bác sĩ tại quá Cam chủ trì cho bệnh nhân với triệu chứng bệnh nội đường hô hấp, người trước đó đã từng du lịch đến những vùng xảy ra trường hợp bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1) trong vòng 10 ngày trước khi bắt đầu có các triệu chứng của căn bệnh cần liên lạc số Y Tế Công Cộng (Public Health) ngay lập tức ở số (714) 834-8180 để có được những thử nghiệm thích đáng.
Orange County Animal Care Center Hosts “Adopt Your Valentine” Day

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Animal Care Center will be hosting a new Valentine’s Day event on Saturday, February 11, 2006, from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., at the Animal Care Center, 561 The City Drive South, Orange. The “Adopt Your Valentine” Day event will showcase hundreds of beautiful animals available for adoption into loving homes.

“We invite animal lovers of all ages to celebrate Valentine’s Day with us,” said Jennifer Phillips, Director of Animal Care Services. “Adopt Your Valentine Day is a great opportunity for us to welcome our community, promote responsible pet ownership, highlight our Animal Care Center and Volunteer staff, and most importantly, find loving homes for the many animals in our care.”

In addition to the many wonderful animals available for adoption, the Care Center Volunteer staff will be offering free photo opportunities for adopting owners and their new pets, Valentine’s Day treats and Responsible Pet Ownership booklets for kids of all ages. Explorer Post 538 will be selling refreshments and making balloon animals throughout the event.

Last year over 8,000 dogs, cats, rabbits and other loveable animals were adopted from the Orange County Animal Care Center. For further information on this event, contact Ryan Drabek at (714) 935-6427.

###
Wildfire Smoke Poses Public Health Danger

(Santa Ana) – Smoke drifting from the wildfires in Northeastern Orange County may pose a health danger to individuals in Orange County, especially those in certain high-risk groups.

“Among those who can be most directly affected by smoke exposure are individuals with heart and respiratory diseases, older adults, children and pregnant women,” said Acting County Health Officer Dr. Hildy Meyers. “Air pollution levels from the fire can change rapidly, depending on weather conditions, so we recommend that individuals in these high-risk groups take precautions until the situation is over.”

Those who live, work or attend school in areas downwind from the fire should limit outdoor activity and physical exertion until the smoke diminishes. Other recommendations include:

- Keeping the windows and doors in your home closed, and using your air conditioner on the re-circulate mode if a choice of air sources is available. This will limit the intake of outdoor air and keep your home comfortable.
- Keeping your mouth and nasal passageways moist by drinking lots of water. This helps your body filter out potentially harmful particles in the smoke.
- Contacting your doctor if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue. People who have not been previously diagnosed with lung or heart disease may begin having problems in smoky conditions.
- Making sure those with asthma follow an asthma management plan and have at least a five-day supply of medication on hand.

# # #
For Immediate Release
February 23, 2006

County of Orange
Health Care Agency
Public Health Services
Press Release

West Nile Virus Activity Detected In Orange County

(Santa Ana) – The first evidence of West Nile Virus (WNV) activity in Orange County during 2006, a dead crow found in the Mission Viejo area, signals the return of the unpredictable virus to Southern California.

“The detection of WNV in birds at this time of the year is not unexpected, since the virus was also found in birds during early 2005,” said Dr. Hildy Meyers, Acting Health Officer. “Most human cases have occurred during the warmer months of the year. We can’t predict from year-to-year how widespread West Nile Virus infections will be, so we encourage all Orange County residents to begin taking precautions now as the days grow longer and people increase the time they spend outdoors.”

People can contract WNV when bitten by an infected mosquito, so preventing mosquito bites is the key to reducing your chance of infection. Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Eliminating any standing water from your property to reduce mosquito breeding
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors, especially at dusk and dawn.

After first being detected in Orange County during 2003, human illnesses due to West Nile Virus have been reported during 2004 and 2005. Last year, there were 17 confirmed WNV infections among Orange County residents. Statewide, 928 human cases and 18 deaths were attributed to WNV infection in 2005. More information about WNV is available on the Health Care Agency’s website at www.ochealthinfo.com.

# # #
Chickenpox Cases Provide Reminder Of the Importance of Vaccination

(Santa Ana) – Parents are encouraged to ensure their children have been vaccinated against chickenpox (varicella) following recent reports of chickenpox cases in several local school districts.

“Chickenpox is highly infectious and the virus that causes chickenpox spreads from person to person through direct contact or through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes,” said Dr. Hildy Meyers, Acting Health Officer. “While many people think of chickenpox as a mild childhood illness, it can be more serious for some people, so it is important that children and adults are properly vaccinated to increase their protection against chickenpox.”

Chickenpox causes a blister-like rash on the skin, usually on the face, scalp or trunk. People with chickenpox can be contagious from one to two days before the rash appears and the illness typically lasts from five to ten days. Anyone with chickenpox should stay home until the rash has completely crusted over, which is usually about five days from the time the rash starts. High fever, severe itching, dehydration or headache may also occur. More severe complications from chickenpox can occur, especially among those with weakened immune systems. Pregnant women who have not had chickenpox before should avoid contact with anyone who has chickenpox.

Vaccination against chickenpox is recommended for children and adults who have not had chickenpox and have not been previously vaccinated. People who have previously had chickenpox or who have been vaccinated occasionally still get chickenpox, but they usually have a milder illness without fever. Vaccinated persons who get the milder form of chickenpox may still spread the disease to others who are not protected, so they should be kept at home until any blisters have formed scabs or if there are no blisters present, until no new spots or bumps are forming. Contact your healthcare provider to discuss whether you and your child should be vaccinated, or call the Health Care Agency’s Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 to find out where you can get vaccinated.

# # #
Countywide Effort Targets Problem of Underage Drinking

(Santa Ana) – Organizations from throughout Orange County are joining together to sponsor a series of Town Hall meetings examining the problem of underage drinking and seeking solutions to this dangerous practice.

“Alcohol is the most frequently used substance by California youth. By the time our children reach 5th grade, 27% have used alcohol, and that number increases to more than 62% by the time youth reach the 11th grade,” said Acting County Health Officer Dr. Hildy Meyers. “Surveys clearly show that youths who drink excessively are at higher risk for social and school related problems. For the health of our children, we must all work together to address the problem of underage drinking in our communities.”

The Town Hall meetings, to be held during March, April and May, encourage parents to “Start Talking Before They Start Drinking,” because research shows that families exert a great deal of influence on whether a child uses alcohol later in life. According to the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, children and teens are less likely to abuse alcohol if parents are involved in their children’s lives, make and enforce clear rules and are positive role models.

The Orange County Health Care Agency will co-host two of the Town Hall meetings to be held in the county. Those meetings will be held:

- Monday, March 27 from 12:30 – 2 p.m., at the Stanton Community Resource Center, 11822 Santa Paula Street, and
- Monday, May 1 from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., at Savanna High School in Anaheim, 301 N. Gilbert Street.

Other Town Hall meetings will be held in Aliso Viejo, Fullerton, Irvine, Orange, and Santa Ana. For more information on the Town Hall meetings, contact Golnaz Agahi of the Health Care Agency’s Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT) at (714) 834-2094.

# # #
Public Health Week Highlights Orange County’s Public Health

(Santa Ana) – Because of public health and the vital role of public health workers, Orange County residents now enjoy better health, live in healthier conditions, know more about how to take care of their health, and live longer than at any time in the past. Public Health Week, April 3-9, is a nationwide health promotion focusing on the many public health programs and services that protect community health, prevent the spread of disease, keep the environment safe, promote healthy behaviors, prevent injuries, assure quality health care and respond to disasters.

“National Public Health Week provides an excellent opportunity to highlight and commend the exemplary efforts of public health professionals in Orange County who protect, promote and enhance the health of our community,” said Dr. Hildy Meyers, Acting Health Officer.

This year’s Public Health Week theme is “Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids,” and some of the activities planned to commemorate Public Health Week include:

- Public Health Week Kick-off event – Including presentation of a resolution from the Board of Supervisors. Speakers include State Public Health Officer Dr. Mark Horton and HCA Director Julie Poulson; April 3, 11 a.m. to 12 noon; Health Care Agency, 1725 W. 17th St., Santa Ana.
- Car Seat Check-Up; April 4, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Brea Community Center, 695 E. Madison Way, Brea. By appointment only, call (714) 834-3059
- Childhood Injury and Safety Health Fair; April 4, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Babies “R” Us, 2575 E. Imperial Hwy., Brea. (714) 667-8336
- Kids Challenge: Steps to a Healthier You Event; Free pedometers for children, Body Mass Index (BMI) calculations, health information and much more; April 5, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Tustin Certified Farmers Market, corner of El Camino Real and 3rd St.; April 6, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Costa Mesa Fairgrounds, 88 Fair Drive; April 7, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Laguna Hills Mall Parking Lot, 5 Fwy. and El Toro Rd. (714) 834-4429
- Gerald Wagner Health Education Award, award for health care professionals in the community who demonstrate exceptional commitment to health education and service, April 11. (714) 834-4429

For more information about Public Health Week and a listing of additional events, visit the Health Care Agency’s Public Health Week webpage at www.ochealthinfo.com/public/phweek.
Orange County Health Status Profile Shows Improvement in Key Categories

(Santa Ana) – Reductions in the age-adjusted death rates for lung cancer and coronary heart disease, along with a continuing reduction in the reported incidence of AIDS are among the highlights included in the latest Health Status Profile for Orange County.

The report, released annually during Public Health Week by the California Department of Health Services, tracks the county’s progress toward achieving health status indicators, including the national Healthy People 2010 objectives. “Orange County has already achieved the Healthy People 2010 objectives for reducing death rates due to all types of cancer collectively and lung cancer specifically,” said Acting Health Officer Dr. Hildy Meyers. “While these are important achievements, there are other areas in which Orange County residents can still make significant improvements in their health.”

The report offers many comparisons for a three-year period from 2002-2004 to the prior period of 1999-2001. It shows that age-adjusted death rates for coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease and female breast cancer all decreased in the latest three-year period. The reported incidence of AIDS decreased 20.6% with a case rate of 8.1 cases per 100,000 people age 13 years and older, and the incidence of tuberculosis decreased 13.3% to 7.8 cases per 100,000.

Among the categories showing an increase was the reported incidence of Chlamydia, a sexually transmitted infection, which had a 7.6% increase in the case rate during the latest three year period. Increases were also noted in the percentage of low birthweight infants, deaths due to motor vehicle accidents and in drug-induced deaths. The complete County Health Status Profile is found on the California Department of Health Services website at www.dhs.ca.gov/hisp/chs/OHIR/reports/healthstatusprofiles.

# # #
Local Food Establishments Receive Awards Of Excellence

(Santa Ana) – From a qualifying group of almost 9,000 food facilities throughout Orange County, the Health Care Agency’s Environmental Health Division has issued 2,088 Award of Excellence Certificates to Orange County food facilities this month. The Environmental Health Division’s Food Protection Program recognizes these facilities for their outstanding food safety and sanitation practices. The certificate acknowledges the dedication of each recipient and highlights their diligent efforts in preventing health code violations.

The Food Protection Program created this annual Award of Excellence in an effort to provide an incentive for food establishments to consistently meet or exceed health and safety standards for food facility operations. Eligible food establishments throughout the County may receive this award each year that they exhibit excellent food safety and sanitation practices.

The Food Protection Program focuses on the inspection of retail and wholesale food facilities in order to promote the safe and sanitary preparation and service of foods, prevent foodborne illness, and protect consumers from adulterated food products. For further information regarding the Health Care Agency’s Food Protection Program, call the hotline at (714) 433-6000 or for a complete listing of all the award recipients, visit us at www.ocfoodinfo.com/foodaward.htm.

###
Medical Director Selected For Orange County’s Child Abuse Services Team (CAST)

(Santa Ana) – Frederic W. Bruhn, M.D., has been selected to serve as Medical Director of the Orange County Child Abuse Services Team (CAST), bringing additional expertise to the program.

“What really attracted me to this opportunity is the multi-disciplinary cooperation among the agencies under one roof at CAST,” said Dr. Bruhn. “We are able to communicate and discuss issues on a daily basis, and you honestly don’t find that in many places. This is one of the unique strengths of the CAST program.”

Dr. Bruhn, a board certified pediatrician and Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics, previously served as Medical Director of the SCAN Team at Children’s Hospital Central California, Madera. He has also served as an Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at several medical schools, most recently at the University of California at San Francisco program in Fresno. Dr. Bruhn is a graduate of the University of Rochester School of Medicine and completed his pediatric residency by serving as Chief Resident at San Francisco General Hospital in 1969-70. He also completed a fellowship in pediatric infectious diseases at the University of Colorado. His professional memberships include Fellowship in the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC) and the Physician’s Network on Child Abuse and Neglect. Dr. Bruhn attained the rank of Colonel in the United States Army, retiring after 20 years of service.

CAST is a multi-disciplinary program that serves as a center of excellence in the diagnosis of child abuse for Orange County, with the goal of strengthening child abuse prevention and identification efforts countywide. Partners in CAST include the Social Services Agency, the Health Care Agency and the District Attorney. CAST staff members provide child welfare services, medical examinations, child advocacy and victim services, and crisis intervention assistance. The Health Care Agency is responsible for the medical and mental health components of the CAST program, with funding for the medical director’s position provided by the Children and Families Commission of Orange County, the Social Services Agency and Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian. Medical Director services will be provided under an agreement between the Health Care Agency and the University of California, Irvine School of Medicine, where Dr. Bruhn will serve as a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics.

# # #
Local Volunteer to Receive Honors from Board of Supervisors

(Garden Grove) – Diana Van New Kirk of Garden Grove is one of 40 honorees who will be honored April 21 by the Orange County Board of Supervisors for their outstanding volunteer achievements in 2005.

More than 25,400 volunteers contributed one million hours of service valued at $23 million in avoided costs for County government in 2005. The Board of Supervisors will pay tribute to these achievements at the tenth annual Countywide volunteer recognition ceremony on Friday, April 21. The event will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Board Hearing Room of the Hall of Administration (HOA), 10 Civic Center Plaza in Santa Ana. A reception will precede the ceremony at 7:45 a.m.

“We are extremely fortunate to have dedicated volunteers who are willing to give so selflessly of their time in order to serve our community,” said County Executive Officer Thomas G. Mauk. “They are a vital resource in improving County services and programs.” Each of forty honorees has made a valuable contribution that tells a distinct story about their experience including Diana Van New Kirk who highlights the volunteer spirit.

Diana joined the Animal Care Center Volunteer Program in February 2004, and currently works with the Animal Assistance League’s Pet Helpline. Diana’s volunteer involvement benefits the animals she works with in many ways, especially by enhancing their chances for a successful adoption. When visitors stop by the Animal Care Center and speak with volunteers like Diana, who are knowledgeable about the animals and experienced in working with them, they are more likely to return in the future to adopt a pet.

Photo opportunities will immediately follow the event. More information on the County’s volunteer recognition ceremony, directions to the HOA and parking instructions are available online at http://www.ocgov.com/hr/volunteer/volunteerrecognition06.asp. You may access County agencies and departments online at www.ocgov.com.

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Local Volunteer to Receive Honors from Board of Supervisors

(Huntington Beach) – Barry Sohl of Huntington Beach is one of 40 honorees who will be honored April 21 by the Orange County Board of Supervisors for their outstanding volunteer achievements in 2005.

More than 25,400 volunteers contributed one million hours of service valued at $23 million in avoided costs for County government in 2005. The Board of Supervisors will pay tribute to these achievements at the tenth annual Countywide volunteer recognition ceremony on Friday, April 21. The event will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Board Hearing Room of the Hall of Administration (HOA), 10 Civic Center Plaza in Santa Ana. A reception will precede the ceremony at 7:45 a.m.

“We are extremely fortunate to have dedicated volunteers who are willing to give so selflessly of their time in order to serve our community,” said County Executive Officer Thomas G. Mauk. “They are a vital resource in improving County services and programs.”

Each of forty honorees has made a valuable contribution that tells a distinct story about their experience including Barry Sohl who highlights the volunteer spirit.

Barry Sohl is a shining example of the enormous impact that one person can have on the life of a child. His dedication, compassion and patience as a mentor with Children and Youth Services-Project Together have positively influenced his mentee’s life in numerous ways.

Barry has devoted hundreds of hours, serving as the boy’s friend, tutor and coach. The greatest accolades for Barry’s accomplishments are expressed in a letter written by his mentee’s mother, a single parent and full-time student. She writes, “I know in my heart there are not enough words to let Barry know how grateful I am. He has truly been an angel, and a best friend to my boy.”

Photo opportunities will immediately follow the event. More information on the County’s volunteer recognition ceremony, directions to the HOA and parking instructions are available online at http://www.ocgov.com/hr/volunteer/volunteerrecognition06.asp. You may access County agencies and departments online at www.ocgov.com.

###
Local Volunteer to Receive Honors from Board of Supervisors

(Mission Viejo) – Zachary Mikelson of Mission Viejo is one of 40 honorees who will be honored April 21 by the Orange County Board of Supervisors for their outstanding volunteer achievements in 2005.

More than 25,400 volunteers contributed one million hours of service valued at $23 million in avoided costs for County government in 2005. The Board of Supervisors will pay tribute to these achievements at the tenth annual Countywide volunteer recognition ceremony on Friday, April 21. The event will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Board Hearing Room of the Hall of Administration (HOA), 10 Civic Center Plaza in Santa Ana. A reception will precede the ceremony at 7:45 a.m.

“We are extremely fortunate to have dedicated volunteers who are willing to give so selflessly of their time in order to serve our community,” said County Executive Officer Thomas G. Mauk. “They are a vital resource in improving County services and programs.” Each of forty honorees has made a valuable contribution that tells a distinct story about their experience including Zachary Mikelson who highlights the volunteer spirit.

A recent graduate from the University of California, Irvine, Zachary joined the Health Promotion Division, Bioterrorism Preparedness Program as a health education intern in July 2005 and has contributed more than 225 volunteer hours working on the Special Populations Needs Assessment for emergency planning. Zachary’s enthusiasm and dedication to the project were evident in his work and the fact that he extended his internship beyond the required timeframe.

According to Zachary, “Sometimes the volunteer experience is worth more than the pay when it comes to personal and professional development. I know that my time with the County has benefited my coworkers, our community and myself.” Photo opportunities will immediately follow the event. More information on the County’s volunteer recognition ceremony, directions to the HOA and parking instructions are available online at http://www.ocgov.com/hr/volunteer/volunteerrecognition06.asp. You may access County agencies and departments online at www.ocgov.com.

###
Local Volunteer to Receive Honors from Board of Supervisors

(Newport Beach) – Nicole Hensley of Newport Beach is one of 40 honorees who will be honored April 21 by the Orange County Board of Supervisors for their outstanding volunteer achievements in 2005.

More than 25,400 volunteers contributed one million hours of service valued at $23 million in avoided costs for County government in 2005. The Board of Supervisors will pay tribute to these achievements at the tenth annual Countywide volunteer recognition ceremony on Friday, April 21. The event will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Board Hearing Room of the Hall of Administration (HOA), 10 Civic Center Plaza in Santa Ana. A reception will precede the ceremony at 7:45 a.m.

“We are extremely fortunate to have dedicated volunteers who are willing to give so selflessly of their time in order to serve our community,” said County Executive Officer Thomas G. Mauk. “They are a vital resource in improving County services and programs.” Each of forty honorees has made a valuable contribution that tells a distinct story about their experience including Nicole Hensley who highlights the volunteer spirit.

Nicole Hensley was just 20 years old when she first volunteered to mentor a child through Providence Community Services, a contract program with Health Care Agency Children and Youth Services. Nearly six years later, she has served as a Project Together mentor to four additional children and has volunteered more than 1,500 hours.

In addition to serving as a volunteer mentor, Nicole rallied her co-workers to become involved with a program that provides low-income clients with food, gifts and clothing during the holiday season. Through Nicole’s efforts, more than 50 children experienced the joy and excitement associated with this special time of year.

Photo opportunities will immediately follow the event. More information on the County’s volunteer recognition ceremony, directions to the HOA and parking instructions are available online at http://www.ocgov.com/hr/volunteer/volunteerrecognition06.asp. You may access County agencies and departments online at www.ocgov.com.

###
**For Immediate Release**  
April 24, 2006

**Immunizing Children Protects the Community**

(Santa Ana) – Ensuring that children are properly vaccinated protects not only the child, but others in the family and the community in general from communicable diseases.

The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) will celebrate National Infant Immunization Week, April 22-29, with a special event on Wednesday, April 26th from 10-11 a.m. at the Public Health Immunization Clinic, 1725 W. 17th Street, Santa Ana. The event will include a magic show, story and music time and a review of children’s immunization records to make sure they have received all recommended shots. Parents will also have the opportunity to have their children receive any needed vaccinations free of charge. “Community Immunity” is the theme for this year’s observance in California, recognizing the importance of immunization in preventing the spread of diseases to others.

“The recent outbreak of mumps cases in the Midwest and chickenpox cases reported in Orange County this year show that proper immunization is very important to protecting everyone’s health,” said Troy Jacobs, M.D., HCA’s Family Health Medical Director. “Vaccines available today greatly reduce the risk that your child or others they are in close contact with will contract these illnesses.”

Another vaccine preventable illness on the rise in California is pertussis, or whooping cough. In 2005, 120 whooping cough cases were reported in Orange County, an 8% increase over the previous year. Statewide, whooping cough cases increased more than 200% last year, and seven children in California died of the illness.

Orange County health care providers also have a new tool to track immunizations through a computerized immunization registry implemented in March 2005. In the past year, the immunization records of almost 55,000 people have been entered into the registry. The system allows providers easy access to the latest immunization records for children and adults and helps them determine when vaccinations are needed or prevent the over-vaccination of children. It also helps to prevent the loss of paper-based immunization records and will be of great benefit to both parents and health care providers in the coming years. Orange County is part of a regional immunization registry also serving Los Angeles County.

# # #
April Showers bring…May Mosquitoes?

(Santa Ana) – April rains, followed by rapidly warming temperatures, may prove to be a dangerous combination for Orange County and all of Southern California when it comes to mosquitoes and West Nile virus (WNV).

“By this time last year, WNV positive mosquitoes had already been detected in Orange County,” said Acting Health Officer Dr. Hildy Meyers. “The extended rainy season and cooler than usual temperatures have kept mosquito counts low, but that may change quickly with the arrival of warmer weather.”

Human WNV cases in Orange County were down almost 74% to just 17 confirmed cases last year, from the peak of 64 cases in 2004. Statewide, WNV cases were up more than 12% in 2005 as Northern California experienced a significant increase in reported infections.

“West Nile virus is here to stay, and it is likely that human cases will occur every year,” said Dr. Meyers. “Because we are not able to predict in advance how severe each season will be, it is very important that Orange County residents begin taking action now to prevent mosquito bites.”

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce mosquito breeding
- Making sure your door and window screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

For more information about West Nile virus, visit the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com/epi/wnv.

# # #
For Immediate Release
April 28, 2006

Mussel Quarantine

(Santa Ana) – The County of Orange Health Care Agency reminds shellfish consumers that the Annual Mussel Quarantine in California will take effect on May 1st and will continue through October 31st, 2006. Sport harvesting of mussels for human consumption is prohibited along the entire California coastline. All bays and inlets are included in the quarantine. The purpose of this quarantine is to protect the public from deadly poisons that may be present in bivalve mollusks, such as mussels, clams, oysters and scallops. Between 1927 and 2005, California recorded 521 cases of Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning, including 32 deaths.

The greatest hazard is poisoning from mussels because they develop high levels of toxin more quickly than other mollusks and are eaten whole without removal of digestive organs. All dark parts should be removed from clams, oysters and scallops before eating, since the poison may be concentrated in those areas. Health officials emphasize that toxic mussels cannot be distinguished from harmless ones. Moreover, cooking does not destroy the toxins, as they are relatively heat resistant.

The California quarantine applies only to mussels collected locally by sports harvesters. All commercial shellfish harvesters in California must be certified by the State and are subject to strict testing requirements.

The safest guideline to follow is: Do not eat mussels from California coastal waters collected by sports harvesters until after October 31.

###
Joint Meeting Addresses Issues of Substance Abuse and Mental Disorders

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County’s Mental Health Board and the Alcohol and Drug Advisory Board will hold a joint Public Forum on Wednesday, May 10th to address the co-occurring problems of substance abuse and mental disorders. Clients, family members, mental health and alcohol and drug professionals, and interested members of the public are encouraged to attend the meeting, which will be held from 1:30-4:30 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Hearing Room at the Orange County Hall of Administration, 10 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana.

While it is difficult to estimate the prevalence of individuals with both substance abuse and mental disorders, the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has recognized individuals with co-occurring disorders as a “large and significantly underserved population.” Many individuals with co-occurring disorders are homeless or in the criminal justice system and have difficulty accessing integrated treatment services.

At the Public Forum, members of the Mental Health Board and Alcohol and Drug Advisory Board will receive public comment on what is needed in Orange County to improve the quality of care for those with co-occurring disorders, how to develop effective service partnerships and on efforts to coordinate and integrate care. An integrated treatment approach for people with co-occurring disorders includes a comprehensive array of consumer-focused and consumer-family centered services that can be accessed with a “no wrong door” approach, meaning that services can be accessed no matter where an individual enters the system.

For more information on the Public Forum, contact Judy Griset at (714) 834-5481.

# # #
For Immediate Release
May 5, 2006

Public Education and Activities Planned to Observe Emergency Medical Services
Week May 14-20, 2006

(Santa Ana) – In observance of Emergency Medical Services Week May 14-20, 2006, the County of Orange Health Care Agency and a coalition of Orange County emergency services and healthcare providers have come together to plan a month of public information and outreach activities. From low-cost CPR instruction on “Super CPR Sunday” to Drowning Prevention and Water Safety Awareness and Fire Safety Day, EMS Week activities focus on the many vital emergency services and trainings that are available throughout the County of Orange.

As part of the EMS Week celebration, Orange County residents can get free blood pressure checks at designated fire stations, hospitals and community locations throughout the county. Although high blood pressure often contributes to serious health problems, it can be present with no physical symptoms, so it is important to have regular blood pressure readings. For a complete list of dates and locations where free blood pressure screenings are being offered please visit www.ochealthinfo.com/emsweek/bp.htm.

While California law requires that children up to 6 years of age or 60 pounds ride in child safety seats, it is estimated that 95% of child safety seats are installed incorrectly. On Saturday, May 6 at 10:00 am a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician will conduct a Child Passenger Safety Class at the St. Joseph Mother Baby Assessment Center, 363 S. Main Street, Orange. The discussion will cover the safest ways for children to ride in a vehicle, how to select a child safety seat and how to use and install child safety restraints correctly. On Monday, May 15 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm there will be a Child Safety Seat Inspection event in the Angel Stadium of Anaheim Parking Lot where Certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians will inspect cars and provide training to parents. Both events are free, and reservations are required. To register for the Child Passenger Safety Class call (714) 744-8764. To make an appointment for a Child Safety Seat Inspection call (714) 532-8631.

EMS Week Festivities will conclude on Saturday, May 27 with a Tailgate Celebration at Angel Stadium of Anaheim. The celebration will begin at 4:30 pm and will feature live entertainment and free refreshments. Representatives from Orange County emergency services organizations will be present, and several fire engines, ambulances, and police cars
will be on display.

For further information about EMS Week and a detailed listing of all events, visit the Orange County Health Care Agency’s EMS Week webpage at http://www.ochealthinfo.com/emsweek/events.htm.

###
Orange County Animal Care Center Hosts Pet Fair 2006

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Animal Care Center will host its annual Pet Fair 2006 event on Saturday, May 20, 2006, from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., at 561 The City Drive South, Orange. The event will showcase hundreds of beautiful animals available for adoption into loving homes.

“We invite animal lovers of all ages to celebrate this wonderful day with us,” said Jennifer Phillips, Director of Animal Care Services. “Pet Fair 2006 will be a great opportunity for us to welcome our community, promote responsible pet ownership, highlight our Care Center and Volunteer staff, and most importantly, find loving homes for the many animals in our care.”

In addition to the wonderful animals available for adoption, the Pet Fair will feature many rescue organizations, animal services, dog training presentations and much, much more. Explorer Post 538 will sell refreshments and make balloon animals throughout the event.

Last year over 8,000 dogs, cats, rabbits and other loveable animals were adopted from the Orange County Animal Care Center. For further information on this event, contact Ryan Drabek at (714) 935-6427.

###
Health Care Agency Supervisor Named Environmental Health Specialist of the Year

(Santa Ana) – The California Environmental Health Association (CEHA) has named John Ralls, a Registered Environmental Health Specialist and Supervisor in the Orange County Health Care Agency Food Protection Program, the recipient of the 2006 “Environmental Health Specialist of the Year” award.

The annual award is presented in recognition of significant contributions to the field of environmental health and Ralls was acknowledged for developing the Fresh is Best public education campaign, designed to ensure that foods prepared and stored according to traditional methods are fresh and safe for consumption. The award was presented Wednesday, May 10 during the state association’s 55th annual education symposium, held in Anaheim.

Ralls coordinated the Traditional Foods Project to address public health concerns about the safety of certain traditional foods prepared in Vietnamese restaurants; these foods are often stored at room temperature for extended periods of time. Ralls organized a committee of civic leaders, health educators, food industry representatives and state and local regulators to review the issue. The committee conducted laboratory tests and found that foods cannot be kept at room temperature for extended periods of time and still be considered safe for consumption. Ralls and the committee then developed procedures for safe handling and storage of the foods, initiated time stamp labeling, and implemented a public education campaign. The impact of the project is expected to become a new and permanent way of doing business.

An Orange County employee and CEHA member since 1987, Ralls has been a Supervisor in the Food Protection Program of Orange County Environmental Health since 1996.

###
Important AIDS Anniversary Observed

(Santa Ana) – The date was June 5, 1981. An article entitled “Pneumocystis Pneumonia – Los Angeles” appears in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, a publication of The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This summary of reported pneumonia cases among five men in the Los Angeles area would become the first article about AIDS to appear in the medical literature.

Over the next 25 years, much more would be learned about AIDS as the battle against the disease became worldwide in scope. From 1981 through 2005, a total of 6,671 AIDS cases were reported among Orange County residents. Orange County ranks fifth among California’s 58 counties in cumulative AIDS cases reported through 2005.

“While much progress has been made in the fight against HIV/AIDS, much more work remains to be done,” said David Souleles, Chief of Public Health Operations. “Federal support for medical services, prevention efforts and support services has been essential to our successes and we believe it is important that the same level of support be available in future years.”

Advances in treatment beginning in the mid 1990’s are responsible for a dramatic increase in the number of people living with AIDS. Of the 6,671 AIDS cases reported in Orange County since 1981, 3,278, or 49%, were living as of December 31, 2005. The number of reported AIDS cases has decreased from a high of 736 in 1993 to 165 cases in 2005. Today, AIDS case rates in Orange County remain highest among African Americans and Hispanics.

The Orange County Health Care Agency coordinates HIV/AIDS care, treatment, and support services and HIV/AIDS prevention services for the County of Orange in partnership with community providers. These programs ensure that persons living with HIV/AIDS have access to needed medical and support services and work to prevent the further transmission
of HIV in the community.

###
Orange County awarded $25 million this year for Expanded Mental Health Services

(Santa Ana) – Hundreds of Orange County adults, older adults, children and youth will benefit from new and expanded community mental health services made possible by additional funding provided through California’s Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), also known as Proposition 63.

California Department of Mental Health Director Stephen W. Mayberg formally announced in Orange County today the State’s approval of the Health Care Agency’s MHSA Community Services and Supports Plan, with $25 million dollars to be awarded to the county this year. “We are very excited to begin this new era of public mental health services in Orange County and believe that expanded services will improve the quality of life for many of those who live with mental illness,” said Mark Refowitz, Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) Deputy Director for Behavioral Health Services. Supervisor Bill Campbell, Chairman of the Orange County Board of Supervisors, and Julie Poulson, HCA Director, also participated in the celebration.

The Orange County Board of Supervisors recently approved the development of the Older Adult Support and Intervention Services (OASIS) program that will serve mentally ill older adults who are in need of rehabilitative and recovery services, crisis intervention and ongoing case management. This full service partnership will be Orange County’s first new program funded by Proposition 63. Many other proposals are under development and will go before the Board of Supervisors for approval in the coming months.

Proposition 63 was passed by California voters in November 2004. It funds services for people with severe mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major depression, through an additional 1 percent tax on incomes over $1 million.

###
West Nile Virus Is In Season

(Santa Ana) – The summer season is here, and mosquitoes and West Nile Virus (WNV) may not be far behind. Late spring rains and warm summer temperatures create the perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes – increasing the possibility for human WNV infections.

Nine California counties have reported WNV activity in birds or mosquitoes during 2006, including Orange, Los Angeles and Riverside. While a human WNV infection has not yet been reported in California, experts say it could happen at any time. During 2004 and 2005, the first human WNV cases in Orange County occurred between mid-June and early July.

“West Nile virus is now a fact of life,” said Acting Health Officer Dr. Hildy Meyers. “Orange County residents need to make WNV prevention part of their normal routine.” People 50 years of age and older, and those with certain medical conditions including diabetes and high blood pressure, are at greater risk of severe complications from West Nile Virus infection.

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce mosquito breeding
- Making sure that door and window screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

For more information about West Nile Virus, visit the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com/epi/wnv.

# # #
Health Advisory: High Temperatures Expected in Inland Orange County

(Santa Ana) – With high temperatures expected over the next few days, the Orange County Health Care Agency reminds individuals to take basic precautions to protect their health.

“When temperatures are this high, extra care should be considered especially for young children, older adults, and those with certain chronic health conditions,” said Acting County Health Officer Dr. Hildy Meyers. “Too much physical activity on a hot day, spending too much time in the sun or spending time in a place without adequate air conditioning or cooling can lead to heat related illnesses, including heat exhaustion and heat stroke. It is important that everyone take a few simple precautions.”

Recommendations include:

- Drink plenty of water; don’t wait until you are thirsty.
- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing.
- Avoid unnecessary sun exposure; wear a hat, preferably with a wide brim, when in the sun and use sunscreen.
- Avoid unnecessary exertion if you are outside or in non-air conditioned buildings.
- Never leave children, elderly people or pets unattended in closed cars or other vehicles.
- Check on those who are at high risk to make sure they are staying cool – including seniors who live alone, people with heart or lung disease, and young children.
- Stay cool indoors - if your home is not air conditioned, visit public facilities such as shopping malls and libraries to stay cool.

# # #
For Immediate Release
June 29, 2006

Travelers Visiting Germany Advised About Possible Measles Exposure

(Santa Ana) – Southern California residents who have traveled to Germany, including those visiting for the World Cup soccer matches, should take notice of a recent advisory issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

According to the CDC, nearly 1,200 cases of measles have been reported this year in Germany’s North Rhine-Westphalia region. Three of the 12 cities hosting the World Cup—Cologne, Dortmund, and Gelsenkirchen— are in the affected region. CDC is concerned about the risk posed by the World Cup because tourists are in close proximity, the measles virus is extremely contagious and because travelers may not take as many precautions when traveling to Western Europe as they would to other parts of the world.

CDC recommends that:

- People returning from the World Cup in Germany should see a healthcare provider if they develop signs or symptoms of measles—a fever and a raised rash that begins on the face and spreads to the arms and legs, cough, red eyes, or a runny nose. Call ahead to inform the health care provider’s office of the possibility of measles.
- People with these symptoms should also limit their contact with others as much as possible to prevent the spread of the disease.
- Clinicians seeing a patient with fever should ask about vaccination history and any recent international travel.
- Travelers planning to visit Germany should check their immunization status for measles.

Measles is a highly contagious viral respiratory illness transmitted through coughing and sneezing. The disease can lead to inflammation of the brain, resulting in death in approximately 2 of every 1,000 cases in developed countries, and can be an especially severe disease in people who have weakened immune systems. In the United States, most people born before 1957, those who have had a documented case of measles, and those who have received 2 doses of vaccine providing protection against measles are considered immune.
For Immediate Release
July 12, 2006

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

High Temperatures Expected in Inland Orange County May Pose Health Danger

(Santa Ana) – Many inland Orange County communities are expected to record high temperatures of over 90° this week, increasing the risk of heat related illnesses like heat exhaustion and heat stroke for those who are more sensitive to the heat.

“Those in high risk groups, including older adults, young children and those with certain chronic health conditions, should take a few simple precautions to prevent heat related illnesses,” said Acting County Health Officer Dr. Hildy Meyers. Recommendations include:

- Drink plenty of water; don’t wait until you are thirsty.
- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing.
- Avoid unnecessary sun exposure; wear a hat, preferably with a wide brim, when in the sun and use sunscreen.
- Avoid unnecessary exertion if you are outside or in non-air conditioned buildings. If you are working outdoors, take frequent rest and refreshment breaks in a shaded area.
- Never leave children, elderly people or pets unattended in closed cars or other vehicles.
- Check on those who are at high risk to make sure they are staying cool – including seniors who live alone, people with heart or lung disease, and young children.
- Stay cool indoors - if your home is not air conditioned, visit public facilities such as shopping malls and libraries to stay cool.

# # #
Eric G. Handler, M.D., M.P.H., Appointed Orange County Health Officer

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Board of Supervisors voted today to appoint Eric G. Handler, M.D., M.P.H, to serve as the County Health Officer effective August 1, 2006.

“I am excited to be returning to my home state of California and for the opportunity to serve the residents of Orange County in promoting healthy people and families, healthy communities and environments through compassionate care, education and prevention,” Dr. Handler said.

Dr. Handler’s excellent qualifications were the key to his selection, according to Health Care Agency Director Julie Poulson. “Dr. Handler, who is Board Certified by the American Board of Pediatrics, brings to this important position broad experience gained through a balanced career in clinical, academic and administrative roles,” Ms. Poulson said.

Most recently, Dr. Handler has served as Chief Medical Officer for the Boston Regional Office of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. He was the Director of Pediatric Rehabilitation at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 1986-1989 and served as the Medical Director for the Nisonger Center, a university affiliated program at Ohio State University, from 1989 - 1994. In addition, he was an Associate Professor at Columbus Children's Hospital and taught in the College of Medicine at Ohio State University for seven years.

His public health experience includes serving as the Deputy Secretary for Children's Medical Services in the Florida Department of Health from 1996-2000. Children's Medical Services provided comprehensive coordinated care to 60,000 children with special needs throughout the state of Florida. From 2000 - 2003 he was the Chief Medical Officer for the Florida Department of Children and Families.

A native of Los Angeles, Dr. Handler received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of California, Los Angeles and his Medical Degree from Chicago Medical School. He returned to California for his Pediatrics internship and residency at L.A. County-U.S.C. Hospital and completed a Pediatric Rehabilitation fellowship at Rancho Los Amigos Hospital. Dr. Handler received his Masters in Public Health from UCLA in 1985 and is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

# # #
Detection of West Nile Virus in Mosquitoes is Reason for Precautions

(Santa Ana) – The detection of West Nile Virus (WNV) in mosquitoes collected in Fullerton is a significant indication that Orange County residents should take precautions to prevent mosquito bites.

“West Nile Virus activity has now been detected in both birds and mosquitoes in Orange County this year, so human cases could be reported at any time,” said Dr. Hildy Meyers, Medical Director of Public Health Epidemiology and Assessment. “While WNV activity in Orange County is getting off to a later start this year, we all need to protect ourselves from WNV by taking steps to prevent mosquito bites.”

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

Last year, 17 confirmed human cases of West Nile Virus infection were reported in Orange County while statewide, 935 human WNV infections were reported.

WNV is transmitted by a bite from an infected mosquito. Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus will experience symptoms of West Nile fever, which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age or those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com
Unusual Lung Infection Reported In Orange County

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency has received reports of two cases of an unusual lung infection that is caused by a parasite and is associated with the consumption of raw or undercooked freshwater crab or crayfish.

“We have recently been notified of two cases of lung fluke infection caused by the parasite Paragonimus. These infections are usually related to eating raw or undercooked freshwater crab that is infected with the parasite,” said Dr. Hildy Meyers, Medical Director of Public Health Epidemiology and Assessment. “We are working closely with the California Department of Health Services to try to identify the source of the infected crabs so we can prevent future illnesses.”

Lung fluke infection can be a very serious illness in humans but it is not transmitted from person-to-person. Symptoms of lung fluke infection can include cough, difficulty breathing, diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever and hives. The parasite, Paragonimus, can migrate from the lungs to other organs and infection can last for years. Medication is available to treat the infection.

“We encourage anyone who has developed any of these symptoms after eating raw or undercooked freshwater crab, even if the symptoms are mild, to contact their physician as soon as possible and provide information about when and where raw crab or crayfish may have been consumed. In many people, onset of symptoms may not occur until 6-10 weeks after ingestion of raw, undercooked, salted or pickled crab. It is also very important that freshwater crab and crayfish are properly cooked and not undercooked before they are eaten,” Dr. Meyers stated.
For Immediate Release
August 17, 2006

Contact: Deanne Thompson
(714) 834-2178

Orange County Confirms First Human West Nile Virus Infection of 2006

(Santa Ana) – A 44-year-old South Orange County man has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) infection, becoming the County’s first confirmed human WNV infection in 2006.

The infection was identified through routine screening tests performed when the man donated blood earlier this month. Donated blood is routinely screened for WNV infection to ensure the safety of the blood supply. The man may have acquired the infection outside of Orange County. The Orange County Health Care Agency received confirmation of the test results on August 16.

“This year’s first human infection serves as an important reminder that West Nile Virus is here to stay and that we all must take steps to prevent mosquito bites,” says Dr. Eric G. Handler, County Health Officer. Last year, 17 confirmed human cases of West Nile Virus infection were reported in Orange County while statewide, 935 human WNV infections were reported with 19 WNV-related deaths.

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus will experience symptoms of West Nile fever, which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus

County of Orange
Health Care Agency
Public Health Services
Press Release

Juliette A. Poulson, RN, MN
Director

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For Immediate Release
August 24, 2006

Contact: Howard Sutter
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Continuing Investigation of Lung Fluke Infections Identifies Additional Cases

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency’s continuing investigation of lung fluke infections associated with eating raw or undercooked freshwater sawagani crabs has now identified a total of four laboratory confirmed cases.

“After the reporting of the initial two cases, through interviews with those who may have eaten raw or live freshwater crabs, we identified two additional cases of this rare infection,” said Hildy Meyers, M.D., Epidemiology & Assessment Medical Director. “We have contacted all of the restaurants in Orange County known to have received imported freshwater crabs and have verified that they are no longer being served raw. So far, reports of the crabs being eaten live or raw in the past have been limited to two places, Riptide Sushi and Teppan Grill in Mission Viejo and Chomp Sushi and Teppan Grill in Fullerton. Because it is possible that the crabs were also served raw or undercooked at other restaurants, it is important that anyone who has eaten a raw or undercooked freshwater crab be aware that they might have been exposed to the parasite that can cause lung fluke infection.”

The California Department of Health Services has determined that the sawagani crabs, also known as regal or Japanese river crabs, were distributed to restaurants in at least 16 California counties. Sawagani crabs have a shell that is about three-quarters of an inch across, or about the size of the first joint on a person’s thumb. Including the legs, the crabs are more than 2 inches in size.

Lung fluke infection is not transmitted from person to person. Symptoms of lung fluke infection may not begin for 6 to 10 weeks after eating raw or undercooked freshwater crab and may include cough, difficulty breathing, diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever and hives. The parasite that causes the infection, Paragonimus, can migrate from the lungs to other organs and the infection can last for years. Medication is available to treat the infection.

“Anyone who has developed any of these symptoms after eating raw or undercooked freshwater crab, even if the symptoms are mild, should contact their physician,” stated Eric G. Handler, M.D., County Health Officer. “We strongly recommend that freshwater crabs be completely cooked before they are eaten.”

# # #
For Immediate Release
August 24, 2006

Contact: Deanne Thompson
(714) 834-2178

Orange County Confirms First Human West Nile Virus Cases of 2006

(Santa Ana) – A 24-year-old resident of Orange and an 85-year-old resident of Anaheim have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) infection, becoming the County’s first confirmed symptomatic human WNV cases in 2006, according to County Health Officer Dr. Eric G. Handler.

- The 24-year-old man became ill the first week of August with symptoms of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease. He was hospitalized for treatment and is recovering at home.
- The 85-year-old man first experienced symptoms of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease the first week of August. He remains hospitalized.

An asymptomatic WNV infection was reported earlier this year in a blood donor who was identified through routine blood screening at the time of donation.

This year in California 84 people in 19 counties have been reported with illness due to West Nile Virus and one WNV-related fatality has been reported. Last year, 17 confirmed human cases of West Nile Virus infection were reported in Orange County while statewide, 935 human WNV infections were reported with 19 WNV-related deaths.

“It is important for Orange County residents to recognize that West Nile Virus is an annual seasonal epidemic, flaring up every year during the summer months and continuing into the fall,” said Dr. Handler. “The best way to avoid West Nile Virus infection is to take precautionary measures to avoid mosquito bites.”

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus will experience symptoms of West Nile fever, which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea,
tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops the more serious symptoms of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- State of California [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov)
- Orange County Health Care Agency [www.ochealthinfo.com](http://www.ochealthinfo.com)

# # #
For Immediate Release  
September 8, 2006

Contact: Deanne Thompson  
(714) 834-2178

Additional Lung Fluke Cases Identified

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency’s continuing investigation of lung fluke infections associated with eating raw or undercooked freshwater sawagani crabs has now identified a total of eight laboratory confirmed cases.

Freshwater sawagani crabs have a shell that is about three-quarters of an inch across, or about the size of the first joint on a person’s thumb. Including the legs, the crabs are slightly more than 2 inches in size. Reports suggest the crabs have been eaten whole either live or battered and fried.

Lung fluke infection is not transmitted from person-to-person. Symptoms of lung fluke infection may appear as late as 6 to 10 weeks after eating raw or undercooked freshwater crab and may include cough, difficulty breathing, chest pain, diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever and hives. The parasite that causes the infection, Paragonimus, can migrate from the lungs to other organs and the infection can last for years. Medication is available to treat the infection.

Anyone who has developed any of these symptoms after eating raw or undercooked freshwater crab, even if the symptoms are mild, should consult their physician and be sure to mention ingestion of the crab.

# # #
Orange County Reports Season’s First Influenza Cases

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) has confirmed the first two cases of seasonal influenza, officially signaling the beginning of flu season in Orange County. The first reported cases were Influenza Type A, which is often the predominant strain of influenza reported in the United States.

“While flu season in Orange County usually peaks at the end of December or beginning of January, it is not unusual to have a few influenza cases reported early in the season,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Public Health Officer. “This serves as a reminder that it is always a good idea to get a seasonal flu shot, and to practice good hygiene and hand washing to prevent the spread of germs.”

October-November is the best time to get a flu shot to ensure optimal protection throughout the traditional flu season. Nationwide, more than 100 million doses of influenza vaccine are anticipated to be available this season, which is expected to be sufficient to meet demand.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that those in the highest priority groups be given flu shots before the end of October. The highest priority groups include:

- Children 6-59 months of age
- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- Children and adolescents who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- People with chronic diseases like heart disease, asthma, other lung disease or diabetes
- People with a health condition that suppresses their immune or respiratory system
- Residents of long-term care facilities that house people with chronic medical conditions
- Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children 0 to 59 months of age
- Health care workers

Flu shots are available from private physicians, pharmacies and other retail businesses in the community. Information about these locations and dates is available at http://findaflushot.com. Flu shots are also available for eligible individuals through the County’s annual influenza vaccination program, which begins October 16th. Information about locations and dates for the County’s flu shot program will be available on October 16th by calling the HCA Health Referral Line at 1-800-564-8448 or on our website at www.ochealthinfo.com/public/flu.
Orange County Animal Care Center Hosts “Dog-toberfest”

(Santa Ana) – In honor of Adopt-a-Dog month, the Orange County Animal Care Center will be hosting a “Dog-toberfest” event on Saturday, October 14, 2006, from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., at 561 The City Drive South, Orange. “Dog-toberfest” will showcase hundreds of beautiful animals available for adoption into loving homes.

“We invite animal lovers of all ages to enjoy this day with us,” said Jennifer Phillips, Director of Animal Care Services. “Dog-toberfest is a great opportunity for us to welcome our community, promote responsible pet ownership, highlight our Care Center and Volunteer staff, and most importantly, find loving homes for the many animals in our care.”

In addition to the many wonderful animals available for adoption, the Care Center Volunteer staff will be offering goody bags and seasonal arts and crafts for younger visitors. There will also be giveaways for new adopters and Responsible Pet Ownership booklets for kids of all ages. Explorer Post 538 will be selling refreshments throughout the event.

Last year over 8,000 dogs, cats, rabbits and other loveable animals were adopted from the Animal Care Center. For more information on this event, contact Ryan Drabek at (714) 935-6427.

# # #
For Immediate Release
October 18, 2006

Contact: Deanne Thompson
(714) 834-2178

Seasonal Flu Shots Available in Orange County

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) has scheduled immunization clinics throughout the county to protect area residents from seasonal flu.

Flu shots are available for eligible individuals through the County’s annual influenza vaccination program which began October 16th. Information about locations and dates for the County’s flu shot program is available by calling the HCA Health Referral Line at 1-800-564-8448 or on the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com/public/flu/.

While nationwide more than 115 million doses will be available this year, delays in the distribution process may result in vaccine being temporarily unavailable. Public health experts are urging the public to continue to check with their physician and other health care providers to locate a flu shot.

Seasonal flu shots provide protection against the complications of influenza and help to prevent the spread of influenza to others. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that the following highest priority groups receive flu shots:

- Children 6-59 months of age
- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- Children and adolescents who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- People with chronic diseases like heart disease, asthma, other lung disease or diabetes
- People with a health condition that suppresses their immune or respiratory system
- Residents of long-term care facilities that house people with chronic medical conditions
- Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children 0 to 59 months of age
- Health care workers

Flu shots are also available from private physicians, pharmacies and other retail businesses in the community. Information about these locations and dates is available from several sources, including www.findaflushot.com.

# # #
For Immediate Release
October 19, 2006

Countywide Effort to Promote Red Ribbon Campaign

(Santa Ana) – October 22nd-28th is Red Ribbon Week in Orange County, an important tradition for the drug prevention community with a primary mission to promote drug free youth and communities while reducing the demand for illegal drugs and illegal use of legal drugs.

Red Ribbon Week kicks-off with a “Celebration of Red Ribbon: 100% Me Drug Free” event on Sunday, October 22 at Centennial Park in Santa Ana, from 12-4 pm. The event is one way the Health Care Agency’s Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT) is partnering with the Prevention Coalition of Orange County to address alcohol and other drug (AOD) issues in our communities. Other efforts include fostering collaboration between schools and communities via the Prevention Coalition of Orange County, and conducting year-round campaigns that promote and facilitate reduction of alcohol and other drug problems via town hall meetings, trainings and providing technical support to schools and communities.

Recent surveys provide important information about alcohol and drug use among Orange County youth.

- Among Orange County 11th graders who report using substances, alcohol is the most frequently used substance (35%), followed by marijuana (14%). (Orange County Healthy Kids Survey 2005-06)
- By 11th grade, binge drinking is the predominant way that alcohol is consumed. (2003/2004 California Student Survey)
- 54% of 11th graders report they do not use any alcohol and drugs. (Orange County Healthy Kids Survey 2005-06)

For more information on the Red Ribbon campaign, contact Marilyn Pritchard of ADEPT at (714) 834-3547, or visit the ADEPT website at www.ochealthinfo.com/adept.

# # #
Free Flu Shots offered November 3rd at Emergency Preparedness Exercise

(Santa Ana) – Just in time for flu season, the Orange County Health Care Agency, in partnership with several local organizations, will offer free flu shots to the public while testing the county’s ability to hold several mass vaccination clinics at the same time.

On Friday, November 3rd, free flu shots will be offered beginning at 10 a.m. at three locations in Orange County:

- Golden West College, Huntington Beach (Enter parking lot off Gothard Street at Center Avenue)
- California State University, Fullerton (Drive through flu shot clinic in Parking Lot A, Corner of State College Boulevard and Yorba Linda)
- Saddleback Valley Community Church, 1 Saddleback Parkway, Lake Forest

Each location will offer flu shots from 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. or until all available vaccine has been provided. Flu shots will be provided at no cost to adults and children four years of age and older. Due to vaccine distribution delays, flu shots are not expected to be available at the November 3rd clinics for younger children.

Among the organizations participating in staging the vaccination clinics are Golden West College and the Coast Community College District, the City of Huntington Beach and Huntington Beach Fire Department, California State University Fullerton and the City of Fullerton, Saddleback Valley Community Church, the American Red Cross-Orange County Chapter and the Children and Families Commission of Orange County.

“This exercise will greatly benefit the public as well as the emergency preparedness efforts of our community partners and the Health Care Agency,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “Not only will people be able to get a free flu shot, they will also be helping the County and our partners to improve our capabilities to respond in the event of a public health emergency.”

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County is a major sponsor of the mass vaccination exercise. “Helping to provide flu shots for our community is another way we are working to increase vaccination rates and protect the health of children and families in Orange County,” said Michael Ruane, Executive Director of the Children and Families Commission.
To receive a flu shot, participants should be feeling well on the day of the flu shot exercise and must complete a brief health screening to ensure they can safely receive a flu shot.
Smoke Advisory Issued for Orange County

(Santa Ana) – The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) has issued a smoke advisory that includes Orange County due to smoke drifting from current wildfires.

The AQMD advisory states that localized concentrations of fine particulates may reach the "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" level or higher in areas directly impacted by drifting smoke, including parts of Orange County.

All individuals are urged to exercise caution and avoid unnecessary outdoor activity in the smoke impacted areas. "Among those who can be most directly affected by smoke exposure are individuals with heart and respiratory diseases, older adults, children and pregnant women," said County Health Officer Dr. Eric Handler. "Air pollution levels from the fire can change rapidly, depending on weather conditions, so we especially recommend that individuals in these higher-risk groups limit outdoor activity and physical exertion until the situation is over."

Other recommendations include:

- Keeping the windows and doors in your home closed, and using your air conditioner on the re-circulate mode, if available. This will limit the intake of outdoor air and keep your home comfortable.
- Keeping your mouth and nasal passageways moist by drinking lots of water. This helps your body filter out potentially harmful particles in the smoke.
- Contacting your doctor if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue. People who have not been previously diagnosed with lung or heart disease may begin having problems in smoky conditions.
- Those with asthma should follow an asthma management plan, making sure to have at least a five-day supply of asthma medication on hand.

# # #
For Immediate Release  
November 14, 2006

Contact: Richard Sanchez  
(714) 433-6473

Don’t Invite Foodborne Illness to Your Thanksgiving Meal

(Santa Ana) – As the countdown to the Thanksgiving holiday begins, consumers are stocking up on traditional foods certain to make the holiday meal something special. While popular Thanksgiving items such as poultry, dressings and gravy are delicious holiday standards, they are also foods in which bacteria may thrive.

“Preparing special holiday foods and sharing them with family and friends is an important part of the Thanksgiving tradition. Taking a few simple precautionary steps will help keep food borne illness from ruining your holiday celebration,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer.

Bacteria such as Salmonella, Campylobacter and E. coli are the primary causes of foodborne illness in the United States. These types of bacteria grow rapidly on foods that are moist, rich in protein and held at temperatures between 41 degrees Fahrenheit and 135 degrees Fahrenheit.

To keep bacteria and foodborne illness away from your holiday table, follow these simple food preparation guidelines:

- Thaw frozen turkey inside the refrigerator on the bottom shelf in its original wrapping. Make sure that other foods are above the thawing turkey to prevent contamination. Thawing a moderate sized turkey in this manner may take one to three days. If time does not permit a gradual thaw, place the frozen unwrapped turkey in a clean shallow container and allow cool running water to flow across the surface with sufficient velocity to flush loose particles down the drain.
- Wash your hands, utensils, cutting boards and other items that have been in contact with the raw meat or poultry with soap and hot water to prevent contaminating other foods or re-contaminating the cooked turkey.
- Set the oven temperature at 325 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.
- Use a meat thermometer to make sure the meat and poultry are cooked all the way through. Place the thermometer into the thickest section of meat or poultry.
- Cook the whole turkey to an internal temperature of at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit.
The recommended cooking time for your turkey can be obtained from instructions on the poultry wrapper, a cookbook or you can call the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Meat and Poultry Hotline at (888) 674-6854.

- Don’t let the turkey, dressing or gravy sit at room temperature for more than two hours. These foods are particularly high in protein and moisture and should be kept above 135 degrees Fahrenheit or below 41 degrees Fahrenheit at all times. Promptly refrigerate or freeze leftovers in covered shallow containers.
- Use leftovers within 4 days, except stuffing and gravy which should be used within 2 days. Reheat leftovers to at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit prior to serving.

The Orange County Health Care Agency’s Food Protection program participates in the inspection of retail and wholesale food facilities to prevent foodborne illness. It also promotes the safe and sanitary preparation and service of foods. For more information about the program or to obtain guidelines for safe food preparation call (714) 433-6000 or visit www.ocfoodinfo.com.

# # #
Flu Shots Still Available in Orange County
November 27 – December 4, 2006 is National Influenza Vaccine Week

(Santa Ana) – ‘Tis the season for spreading good cheer – and often for spreading the influenza virus. When it comes to your health, a flu shot may be the best gift you get this holiday season. Anyone wishing to prevent becoming ill with influenza should get vaccinated.

“The flu season in Orange County usually peaks near the end of December or the beginning of January and can last until April,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “National Influenza Vaccine Week is a timely reminder that it’s not too late to protect your health by getting a flu shot.”

Flu shots are available for eligible individuals through the County’s annual influenza vaccination program. Information about locations and dates for the County’s flu shot program is available by calling the HCA Health Referral Line at 1-800-564-8448 or on the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com/public/flu. Flu shots are also available from private physicians, pharmacies and other retail businesses in the community.

Seasonal flu shots provide protection against the complications of influenza and help to prevent the spread of influenza to others. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that the following highest priority groups receive flu shots:

- Children 6-59 months of age
- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- Children and adolescents who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- People with chronic diseases like heart disease, asthma, other lung disease or diabetes
- People with a health condition that suppresses their immune or respiratory system
- Residents of long-term care facilities that house people with chronic medical conditions
- Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children 0 to 59 months of age
- Health care workers

# # #
For Immediate Release
November 27, 2006

Samuel J. Stratton, MD, Appointed Medical Director for Orange County Emergency Medical Services

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency today announced the appointment of Samuel J. Stratton, MD, as Medical Director for Orange County Emergency Medical Services effective December 1, 2006.

“I am honored to have been selected to serve the County in this role,” said Dr. Stratton. “Emergency Medical Services in Orange County are of the highest caliber. I look forward to working hard to uphold that standard of excellence.”

“Dr. Stratton has an impressive background in Emergency Medical Services and field experience in disaster medicine,” stated Terre Duensing, Health Disaster Management Division Manager. “He is uniquely qualified to provide medical expertise and oversight to our Health Disaster Management team, and to work collaboratively with our emergency medical services partners throughout Orange County.”

Most recently, Dr. Stratton was the Medical Director for the Redondo Beach Fire Department and previously served for ten years as the Medical Director of the Los Angeles County Emergency Medical Services Agency. He is currently a faculty member of the UCI Medical Center Emergency Medicine Department and holds a faculty position at the UCLA School of Public Health.

Dr. Stratton received his Bachelor of Science Degree from New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, his Medical Degree from the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, and completed his residency in Internal Medicine at the University of California Irvine. Dr. Stratton received a Masters in Public Health from UCLA in 1999 and is board-certified in both Emergency Medicine and Internal Medicine.

# # #
Plan for a Healthy, Happy Holiday Season

(Santa Ana) – Don’t let influenza and other viral illnesses ruin your holiday season this year. Plan ahead by taking some simple preventive measures like getting a flu shot and practicing good hygiene habits to help make your holidays merry and bright.

“It has been a relatively mild flu season so far in California, but activity is picking up in other areas of the country,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Public Health Officer. “While it is difficult to predict when flu season will peak in Orange County and how bad it will be, there is still time to benefit from getting a flu shot.”

Practicing good hygiene habits will also help prevent the spread of germs and viruses during the holidays, some self-care recommendations include:

- Covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Washing your hands frequently
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Getting plenty of rest
- Drinking plenty of liquids
- Staying home if you are sick or have symptoms of flu-like illness

This year, since both Christmas and New Year’s Day fall on a Monday, some physician offices may be closed during the Friday before or Tuesday after the holiday. Individuals who feel like they are becoming ill, who need prescription refills or have other routine needs should contact their physician’s office now to make arrangements before the holidays arrive.

For those who are interested, flu shots are available for eligible individuals through the County’s annual influenza vaccination program. More Information about locations and dates for the County’s flu shot program is available by calling the HCA Health Referral Line at 1-800-564-8448 or by visiting the Health Care Agency’s website at www.ochealthinfo.com/public/flu. Flu shots are also available from private physicians, pharmacies and other retail businesses in the community.
For Immediate Release  
December 12, 2006

Holiday Pet Safety Tips

(Santa Ana) – The holidays are a wonderful time to celebrate with family and loved ones, but it can also be a stressful and dangerous time for your family pet. With Christmas and the New Year just around the corner, Orange County Animal Care Services (ACS) offers the following tips to help keep your pet safe during the holiday season.

- Hang breakables, tinsel, and other tempting decorations well out of paw’s reach. Tinsel, ribbon and ornaments are especially dangerous to pets if chewed and swallowed.

- Place holiday plants out of pet’s reach. Some seasonal plants, including mistletoe, holly berries and poinsettias, can be poisonous.

- Make sure strands of lights, loose wires, and extension cords are out of reach. Pets, especially puppies, often try to chew them and may get burned, shocked, or electrocuted.

- Metal ornament hooks can get caught in curious mouths. Use ribbon or yarn instead of hooks to hang ornaments.

- A Christmas tree should stand on a wide, flat base. Anchoring the tree with fishing line tied to a drapery rod or wall hook can prevent the tree from falling over on your pet.

- Cover your tree stand tightly with skirt ing. The water from the tree base can cause mouth sores, vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of appetite. Needles from both artificial and live trees are indigestible, and can be harmful to your pet if swallowed.

- Keep your pet away from holiday treats, especially chocolate. Some ingredients in chocolate are toxins and can be fatal to animals.

- When you entertain, provide a “safe haven” where pets can retreat when they get overly excited and there is a possibility of escape.

- If you are going away for the holidays, make sure that pet enclosures are secure and that your pets are wearing proper identification. Remember to make advance plans for their care during your absence.
While your pet is in a safe and loving home, please remember those less fortunate animals. Nationwide, millions of pets will be homeless this holiday season. Shelter animals appreciate toys, treats and love and attention as much as your pets at home. Please visit your local shelter today and share a little holiday cheer with some very deserving animals.

For more information about the Orange County Animal Care Center please visit our website at www.ocpetinfo.com.

# # #
For Immediate Release
December 13, 2006

Eligibility for Free Flu Shots Expanded

(Santa Ana) – Adults of all ages and children 6 months of age and older are now eligible for free flu shots through programs sponsored by the Orange County Health Care Agency.

The California Department of Health Services has expanded eligibility for public health flu shot programs to encourage more Californians to get a flu shot and enhance their protection against influenza. “We are very pleased that the State has taken this step to make flu shots available to anyone who is interested in protecting themselves against the flu and we hope more Orange County residents will participate in the flu shot program,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “While the flu season is off to a slow start in California, influenza cases are increasing in other areas of the country and the flu season could peak in California during January or February.”

Free flu shots are available, while vaccine supplies last, through Public Health clinics located in Santa Ana, Buena Park, Costa Mesa and San Juan Capistrano. Flu shots have also been provided to many community clinics located in Orange County. For more information on influenza vaccination locations and schedules, please call the Orange County Health Care Agency’s Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 or visit www.ochealthinfo.com.

# # #
For Immediate Release

December 18, 2006

Preventing Holiday Injuries

(Santa Ana) – Each year, thousands of people in the United States spend time in a destination not typically associated with the Holiday Season – a hospital emergency room – for treatment of injuries.

“Emergency medical service personnel and hospital emergency room staff are very familiar with the types of injuries typically seen during the Holidays,” said Greg Boswell, RN, Orange County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Program Manager. “By exercising caution and working to prevent injuries, we hope that everyone will be able to safely enjoy the Holidays.”

One concern during the holidays is the danger posed by drunk drivers. “Too many holiday celebrations end tragically because of drunk or impaired drivers,” Boswell said. In 2005, 46% of the fatal motor vehicle accidents in California were alcohol related. Motorists are also urged to obey posted speed limits and drive with caution on roads and highways that will be busy with holiday traffic. Other safety recommendations include:

- Ensuring that children riding in motor vehicles are seated in properly installed car and booster seats that are appropriate for their age and size.
- Including a helmet and other safety gear when giving active gifts like bikes and skateboards.
- Making sure that gifts are appropriate for the child’s age and never allowing infants and toddlers to use toys with small parts that could become choking hazards.
- Making sure that children remain properly seated in shopping carts (Over 17,000 children in the U.S. suffer injuries annually in falls from shopping carts).
- Using caution to prevent falls when putting up or removing holiday decorations.
- Making sure your home has working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and taking precautions to prevent fires associated with Christmas trees and Holiday candles.

Boswell also reminded motorists they can help emergency personnel by safely pulling their vehicle as far to the right as possible and coming to a complete stop whenever any emergency vehicle approaches.
Health Officer Urges Safety Precautions Due To Colder Weather

(Santa Ana) – Cooler than usual temperatures are forecast for Orange County and all of Southern California this weekend, bringing reminders about the importance of safely heating your home.

“In comparison to our recent warm weather, the predicted near freezing overnight temperatures will seem very cold and will result in the increased use of heaters to warm our homes,” said Dr. Eric Handler, Orange County Health Officer. “There have been several recent incidents in the news in which people were overcome by carbon monoxide fumes when using barbecues or other unsafe heating devices in their homes. We want everyone to be safe while trying to stay warm.”

Home heaters should be inspected on a regular basis to ensure they are working properly. Every home should also have working smoke detectors and a battery operated carbon monoxide detector for safety. Never use a barbecue grill, camp stove or a generator indoors because of the dangers posed by carbon monoxide. If you plan to use an electric space heater, make sure it has at least three feet of clearance from drapes, furniture, bedding or any other materials that could catch fire. Avoid using extension cords to plug in your space heater.

Influenza activity is increasing slightly in California and throughout the United States, but it is not too late to get a flu shot. Free flu shots are still available through Orange County Public Health clinics located in Santa Ana, Buena Park, Costa Mesa and San Juan Capistrano. For more information on influenza vaccination locations and schedules, please call the Orange County Health Care Agency’s Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 or visit www.ochealthinfo.com.

# # #
Murine Typhus Cases Reported in Orange County

(Santa Ana) – Two probable human cases of murine typhus have been reported to the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA). Both are adult residents of northwestern Orange County (Los Alamitos and Huntington Beach) who were hospitalized and are recovering at home. While rare, typhus is known to occur in Southern California. Since June 2006, Long Beach has reported multiple cases of murine typhus, and a small number of cases are reported every year in Los Angeles County.

Murine typhus is transmitted by the bite of infected fleas from opossums, rodents and cats. Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle ache and rash. It is not transmissible from person to person, and is treatable with antibiotics. A blood test is needed to make the diagnosis.

Orange County residents can help prevent transmission of the disease by taking simple precautions around their home and yard.

- Remove or trim overgrown vegetation or ground cover where wild animals may hide or nest;
- Keep trash cans covered at all times and eliminate outdoor food and water sources including pet food, bird feeders, and fallen fruit from trees;
- Seal off openings to attics and crawl spaces and keep vent screens in good repair to prevent wild animals from gaining access to houses and other structures;
- Treat domestic animals regularly with flea prevention medications.
- Avoid contact with opossums, rodents, feral cats and other animals that could harbor fleas.
- Report dead opossums, cats or other animals to your local Animal Control agency for removal.

# # #
Precautions Urged for Travel Associated with Lunar New Year – Tiếng Việt

(Santa Ana) – People traveling for the Lunar New Year to countries where avian influenza A (H5N1) cases have been reported are urged to take precautions before, during and after their travel.

The celebration of the Lunar New Year results in increased travel between the United States and many Asian countries. Human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1), or bird flu, have been reported in Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam. Additional countries in Asia, Europe and Africa have reported H5N1 infections in birds. While there are not any restrictions on travel to these countries, certain precautions are recommended:

- Before traveling to areas where avian influenza A (H5N1) has been reported, visit the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov/travel for current information. Make sure all of your routine and travel-related vaccinations are up-to-date. Pack a travel health kit containing your routine medications, basic first aid supplies and alcohol-based hand gels to clean your hands. Do not travel if you are sick.

- During travel, avoid direct contact with poultry and do not visit poultry farms or bird markets where live birds are kept. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand gels for hand cleaning when soap and water is not available. Make sure that all poultry products, including eggs, are thoroughly cooked before eating.

- After returning, monitor your health for 10 days. If you develop a fever plus cough, sore throat or trouble breathing, contact your physician and provide information about your symptoms, where you traveled and if you had direct contact with poultry or with sick people.

- Orange County physicians treating patients with respiratory symptoms who have traveled to areas with avian influenza A (H5N1) cases in the 10 days prior to the onset of symptoms should contact Public Health immediately at (714) 834-8180 for appropriate testing.
Khuyến Cân Trong Khi Du Lịch Nhận Dịp Tét Nguyên Dân - In English

(Santa Ana) – Khách du lịch vào dịp Tết Nguyên Dân đến các quốc gia có những báo cáo các trường hợp bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1) được khuyến khích thận trọng trước, đang, và sau chuyến du hành của họ.

Nhận dính đơn mừng Năm Mới Âm Lịch đã gia tăng lượng khách du lịch giữa Hoa Kỳ và nhiều quốc gia thuộc vùng Châu Á. Những trường hợp người bị mắc bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1), hay bệnh cúm của loài vật có cảnh đã được báo cáo tại Azerbaijan, Cà Mוק Bờ, Trung Hoa, Djibouti, Ai Cập, Nam Dương, Iraq, Thái Lan, Thổ Nhĩ Kỳ và Việt Nam. Ngoài những quốc gia Châu Á, ở Châu Âu và Châu Phi cũng đã có báo cáo việc lây bệnh H5N1 ở các loại vật có cảnh. Mặc dù không có bất cứ sự hạn chế nào khi thăm viếng các quốc gia này, thì chắc chắn lời khuyên về sự cẩn trọng vẫn được đặt ra:

• Trước khi du lịch đến những vùng được báo cáo có bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1), hãy viếng trang diện từ của Trung tâm Kểm dịch (Centers for Disease Control) tại địa chỉ mang www.cdc.gov/travel để cập nhật tin tức. Hãy chắc chắn rằng tất cả các müi chỉ ngứa thơm thơm và mùi chỉ ngứa cảm khi du lịch vận cồn hiệu lực. Hãy trang bị tùy y tế dùng các loại thuốc thơm thơm, các vật dụng cáp cười cần bản và loại đầu dầu rửa tay đặc chế bằng chất cồn (alcohol-based hand gel) để giữ vệ sinh đôi bàn tay của quý vị. Điều gì du lịch nếu quý vị đang bị bệnh.

• Giữ chức du hành, tránh tiếp xúc trực tiếp với gà vịt và đừng thăm viếng các trại gà vịt hay chỏ bán chim là nơi nuôi giữ các loại chim có công sống. Rửa tay thường xuyên với xà bông và nước, hay rửa tay bằng loại dầu rửa tay đặc chế bằng chất cồn (alcohol-bases hand gel) để rửa tay ở những nơi không sạch nước và xà bông. Hãy chắc chắn rằng tất cả thực phẩm đến từ gà vịt, luôn cần trùng phai được nếu ở châu trục khác khi ăn.

• Sau khi trở về, để ý đến sức khỏe của mình trong 10 ngày. Nếu quý vị bị nóng sốt cộng với ho, rất có hay khó thở, liên lạc với bác sỹ của quý vị và cho bác sỹ biết chi tiết các triệu chứng, nơi nào quý vị đã đến du lịch và có khi nào quý vị tiếp xúc trực tiếp với gà vịt hay với con người bệnh không.

• Các bác sỹ hành nghề trong Quân Cam đang chủ trì những bệnh nhân từng du lịch ở những vùng xảy ra các trường hợp bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1) trong 10 ngày trước do dạng bệnh triều chứng ở đường hô hấp cần lập tức liên lạc với văn phòng Y Tế Công cộng (Public Health) ở số (714) 834-8180 để có được sự thử nghiệm thích đáng.
Mental Health Services Act Growth Funding Plan Available for Review and Comment

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency’s plan to seek an additional $9 million in Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) growth funding for Fiscal Year 2007-2008 is now available for public review and comment during a 30-day period that ends March 7, 2007.

The plan details how growth funding will be used for new or expanded programs to serve children, transitional age youth, adults and older adults with serious mental illness or serious emotional disturbance. Copies of the Plan and Executive Summary will be available on the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com/prop63. The Executive Summary will also be available in Spanish and Vietnamese.

The California Department of Mental Health notified counties that additional Community Services and Supports funding is available due to higher than anticipated revenues under Proposition 63 – The Mental Health Services Act. The Orange County plan was developed through a collaborative process that began in October 2006, and the plan has been approved by the 59-member MHSA Steering Committee. Following the review and comment period, the plan will be submitted to the Orange County Mental Health Board and County of Orange Board of Supervisors for final approval before being submitted to the State.

For more information or to obtain a hard copy of the Growth Funding Plan, contact the MHSA Office at (714) 834-2907.

# # #
Adopt a Valentine at Orange County Animal Care Services

(Orange) – The Orange County Animal Care Center will host its annual “Adopt A Valentine” Day on Saturday, February 10, 2007, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Animal Care Center located at 561 The City Drive South in Orange. The event will feature hundreds of animals available for adoption and offer free spay/neuters for animals adopted during the event.

“We invite animal lovers of all ages to come celebrate ‘Adopt A Valentine’ Day with us,” said Jennifer Phillips, Director of Animal Care Services. “The event is a wonderful opportunity for the community to come see the many animals available for adoption and to learn about responsible pet ownership.”

“Adopt A Valentine” Day will also offer free photo opportunities for adopting owners and their new pets, Valentine’s Day treats and responsible pet ownership booklets and information for kids of all ages. Explorer Post 538 will also sell refreshments.

Last year more than 10,023 dogs, cats, rabbits and other lovable animals were adopted from the Orange County Animal Care Center. For more information about the event, contact Ryan Drabek at (714) 935-6427.

# # #
Local Food Establishments Receive Awards of Excellence

(Santa Ana) – From a qualifying group of 9,300 food facilities throughout the County, the Health Care Agency’s Environmental Health Division has issued 2,043 Award of Excellence certificates to local Orange County food facilities this month. Environmental Health’s Food Protection Program recognizes these facilities for their outstanding food safety and sanitation practices during 2006. The certificate acknowledges the dedication of each recipient and highlights their diligent efforts in preventing health code violations.

Included in the Award of Excellence Program for the first time in 2006 were public and private school food production facilities, with 70 schools gaining recognition. The Award of Excellence Program also includes restaurants, catering establishments, meat and seafood markets, retail bakeries and supermarkets. A complete list of all the award recipients is available on-line at www.ocfoodinfo.com/foodaward.htm.

The Food Protection Program created this annual Award of Excellence to provide an incentive for food establishments to consistently meet or exceed health and safety standards for food facility operations. Eligible food establishments throughout the County may receive this annual award each year that they exhibit excellent food safety and sanitation practices.

The Food Protection Program focuses on the inspection of retail food facilities in order to promote the safe and sanitary preparation and service of foods, prevent foodborne illness, and protect consumers from adulterated food products. For more information about the Health Care Agency’s Food Protection Program, call (714) 433-6000.

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Wildfire Smoke and Heat Pose Potential Public Health Danger

(Santa Ana) – Smoke from the Windy Ridge fire in the Anaheim Hills and City of Orange area may pose a health danger to individuals in Orange County, especially those in certain high-risk groups. In addition, high temperatures may also contribute to the public health danger.

“Among those who can be most directly affected by smoke exposure are individuals with heart and respiratory diseases, older adults, children and pregnant women,” said County Health Officer Dr. Eric Handler. “Air pollution levels from the fire can change rapidly, depending on weather conditions, so we recommend that individuals in these high-risk groups take precautions until the situation is over.”

Residents of areas affected by drifting smoke should limit outdoor activity and physical exertion. Other recommendations include:

- Keep the windows and doors in your home closed, and use your air conditioner on the re-circulate mode, if available, to limit the intake of outdoor air and keep your home comfortable.
- Contact your doctor if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue.
- Follow an asthma management plan, making sure those with asthma have at least a five-day supply of medication on hand.

The Santa Ana wind conditions contributing to the fire have also brought unseasonably warm temperatures. Recommendations to prevent heat related illnesses include:

- Avoid unnecessary sun exposure and unnecessary exertion.
- Drink plenty of water; don’t wait until you are thirsty.
- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing.
- Never leave children, elderly people or pets unattended in closed cars or other vehicles.
- Check on those who are at high risk to make sure they are staying cool – including
seniors who live alone, people with heart or lung disease, and young children.

# # #
Plan to Seek Additional $9 Million for Mental Health Services
To be Reviewed by Mental Health Board

(Santa Ana) – Orange County’s plan to seek an additional $9 million in funding for public mental health services will be reviewed by the county Mental Health Board at a public hearing on Thursday, March 22 from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Delhi Center, 505 East Central, Santa Ana.

An additional $9,030,400 is available to Orange County through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) due to higher than anticipated revenues. The money will make possible new and expanded MHSA Community Services and Supports programs during Fiscal Year 2007-08. “The plan for using these additional dollars was drafted through a process that encouraged community involvement and the plan has been approved by the local MHSA Steering Committee,” said Mark Refowitz, County Mental Health Director.

The plan describes how additional funding will be used for new or expanded programs to serve children, transitional age youth, adults and older adults with serious mental illness or serious emotional disturbance. Copies of the Plan and Executive Summary are available for review on the Orange County Health Care Agency website at http://ochealthinfo.com/prop63.

Following review and approval by the Mental Health Board, the plan must receive final approval from the Orange County Board of Supervisors before being submitted to the California Department of Mental Health. For more information on the plan or on the Mental Health Services Act, contact the MHSA Office at (714) 834-2907.

# # #
Orange County Tuberculosis (TB) Cases Down in 2006

(Santa Ana) – A total of 226 Tuberculosis (TB) cases were reported in Orange County during 2006, a decrease of 6.6% from the total of 242 cases reported in 2005.

"In the past 10 years, the TB case rate in Orange County has decreased from 12.2 cases per 100,000 population in 1997 to 7.3 cases per 100,000 population last year,” said Dr. Eric Handler, Orange County Health Officer. “However, TB remains a significant public health concern, because thousands of Orange County residents have latent TB infection, meaning they carry the germ in their body and are not currently sick with TB, but could become sick later unless they receive treatment.”

Orange County’s 2006 rate of 7.3 TB cases per 100,000 population compares to the statewide rate of 7.4 per 100,000 population and a nationwide rate of 4.6 cases per 100,000 population. Orange County had the fourth largest number of cases reported in California during 2006, behind Los Angeles, San Diego and Santa Clara Counties.

March 24th is recognized as World TB Day. This year’s theme, TB Anywhere is TB Everywhere, recognizes that although TB is preventable and curable, it remains a global public health emergency, with 1.6 million deaths worldwide attributed to TB in 2005. In Orange County, the Health Care Agency’s Public Health Services investigates reports of TB cases and provides treatment and control services to prevent the further spread of TB in the community.

# # #
Orange County Awarded Over $50 Million To Expand Health Care Coverage

(Santa Ana) – Orange County has been selected by State officials to receive more than $50 million over a three year period to expand health care coverage for low-income, uninsured adults.

As a result of today’s announcement, Orange County will receive $16.9 million per year for a three year period that begins September 1, 2007. The additional Federal funding will be used to expand and improve the County’s Medical Services for Indigents (MSI) program, which assists low-income adults 21 to 64 years of age who do not qualify for Medi-Cal or other programs.

“This is great news for Orange County and helps us expand health care coverage to more adults in our communities,” said Julie Poulson, Health Care Agency (HCA) Director. “This effort was successful because of the support provided by the Board of Supervisors and the excellent proposal developed with financial support from the Health Funders Partnership of Orange County. The State’s application process was very competitive, and Orange County is one of only ten counties to be funded.”

The Health Funders Partnership, a collaboration of various organizations that provide health grants within the County, provided funding for consultants who assisted in developing the proposal.

Additional enrollees will be accepted into the MSI program beginning September 1st and the scope of services provided under MSI will be expanded to include primary care and preventive services for all enrollees, including those previously participating in the MSI program.

MSI enrollees will also be linked to a primary care clinic or physician, which will serve as their “medical home.” The medical home program is designed to help reduce use of hospital emergency rooms for non-emergency care. Other enhancements will include disease management programs to benefit patients with chronic health conditions and a web-based health information system to improve the availability of information for doctors and other health care providers.
Increase in Reported *E. coli* O157:H7 Cases

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency has recently received an increased number of *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 case reports and has notified physicians and other health care providers in Orange County to evaluate patients with bloody or unusually severe diarrhea for *E. coli* O157:H7.

HCA has launched an investigation to determine possible sources for six confirmed or suspect *E. coli* cases reported to the Agency from March 31st to April 2nd. Additional testing is now being conducted to determine if the cases are related. The California Department of Health Services is providing assistance for the investigation.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *E. coli* O157:H7 is a leading cause of foodborne illness in the United States. Symptoms may include bloody diarrhea and abdominal cramps. Fever is reported in less than one-third of cases and if present may be a low grade fever. The symptoms of *E. coli* infection typically begin from one to ten days after infection, with an average incubation period of three to four days. Most people recover in five to ten days. In some people, especially children under the age of five and older adults, the infection can lead to a condition called hemolytic uremic syndrome, a very serious condition affecting the kidneys.

Health care providers should immediately report cases of suspect and confirmed *E. coli* O157:H7, hemolytic uremic syndrome or positive shiga toxin testing to Orange County Public Health Epidemiology at (714) 834-8180.
For Immediate Release
Monday, April 2, 2007

Updated Information on E. coli cases

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency’s on-going investigation of an increase in reported E. coli 0157:H7 cases has identified a restaurant at which all currently known cases have reported eating.

Interviews with each of the seven currently known cases have determined they all ate at the Foothill Ranch Souplantation located at 26572 Towne Center Drive, Lake Forest, CA 92610. At least six of the seven are known to have eaten at that restaurant on March 23rd or 24th. The continuing investigation will attempt to identify food items that may be implicated.

“Staff from the Souplantation restaurant and corporate office have been completely cooperative with our on-going investigation of this foodborne outbreak,” said Eric G. Handler, M.D., County Health Officer.

Individuals who ate at this Souplantation restaurant and have developed symptoms that may include bloody diarrhea and abdominal cramps are advised to contact their physician. General information about E. coli is available on the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com or by calling the Agency’s Health Referral Line at 800-564-8448.

Health care providers should immediately report cases of suspect and confirmed E. coli O157:H7, hemolytic uremic syndrome or positive shiga toxin testing to Orange County Public Health Epidemiology at (714) 834-8180.

# # #
Information on E. coli case testing

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency Public Health Laboratory has determined through specialized testing that all seven confirmed E. coli 0157:H7 cases reported recently in Orange County are the same strain. These results indicate there was a common source of infection.

The analysis was conducted using pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE) testing. Results will now be sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where the pattern from these cases will be compared with others on file to determine if it matches any current or past E. coli cases. The Health Care Agency is continuing its investigation to attempt to identify the source of the infections. Also participating in the investigation is the California Department of Health Services.

Interviews with each of the seven confirmed cases have determined that all seven ate at the Foothill Ranch Souplantation located at 26572 Towne Center Drive, Lake Forest, on either March 23rd or 24th.

Other individuals who ate at this Souplantation restaurant and have developed symptoms such as diarrhea or bloody diarrhea should contact their physician or Orange County Public Health Epidemiology at (714) 834-8180. Health care providers should also immediately report confirmed or suspect cases of E. coli O157, hemolytic uremic syndrome or positive shiga toxin testing to Public Health Epidemiology.

General information about E. coli is available on the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com or by calling the Agency’s Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448. Souplantation has also established a toll free telephone number to address customer concerns or questions. That number is (800) 328-7761.

# # #
For Immediate Release
Thursday, April 5, 2007

**Additional E. coli cases identified**

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency’s continuing investigation of *E. coli* O157:H7 cases reported recently in Orange County has now identified a total of ten laboratory confirmed cases.

Interviews with each of the ten confirmed cases have determined that all ate at the Foothill Ranch Souplantation located at 26572 Towne Center Drive, Lake Forest, on either March 23rd or 24th.

We have not yet identified the source of the infections, and our investigation is continuing. The Health Care Agency is coordinating its investigation with the California Department of Health Services.

Other individuals who ate at the Foothill Ranch Souplantation restaurant and have developed symptoms such as diarrhea or bloody diarrhea should contact their physician and Orange County Public Health Epidemiology at (714) 834-8180.

General information about *E. coli* O157 is available on the Health Care Agency website at [www.ochealthinfo.com](http://www.ochealthinfo.com) or by calling the Agency’s Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448. Souplantation has also established a toll free telephone number to address customer concerns or questions. That number is (800) 328-7761.

Health care providers should immediately report confirmed or suspect cases of *E. coli* O157, hemolytic uremic syndrome or positive shiga toxin testing to Public Health Epidemiology at (714) 834-8180.

# # #
For Immediate Release
Friday, April 6, 2007

Bat Found At Corona del Mar High School in Newport Beach
Tests Positive for Rabies

(Santa Ana) – Anyone who may have come into contact with a bat found Friday, April 6th near the gymnasium at Corona del Mar High School, 2101 Eastbluff Drive, Newport Beach, is asked to call the Orange County Health Care Agency, following tests that showed the bat was infected with rabies.

“The bat was found on April 6th before 9:15 a.m. near the gymnasium entry door on the west side,” said Dr. Hildy Meyers, Public Health Epidemiology Medical Director. The bat was picked up from the school by Animal Care Officers and the rabies testing was conducted by the Public Health Laboratory.

“Although school personnel do not believe anyone touched the bat, we want to exercise the utmost in caution by asking anyone who may have come into contact with a bat outside the gymnasium at Corona del Mar High School on April 6th to call Public Health Epidemiology at (714) 834-8525 and leave their contact information. Messages on this line will be checked throughout the weekend and all calls will be returned by Public Health staff,” Dr. Meyers said. Parents of students at Corona del Mar High School should ask their children about seeing or touching a bat in the area of the gymnasium.

Human rabies cases are very rare but can result if a person is bitten by a rabid animal. Medical assistance should be obtained as soon as possible after an exposure so any wound can be cleaned and preventive treatment called post-exposure prophylaxis can be started. This treatment is safe and effective. Most bats do not have rabies, but to minimize the risk, it is best never to handle any bat or wild animal.

Other recommendations to prevent rabies include:

- Immediately wash all animal bites with soap and water, being sure to flush the wound well, then contact your doctor
- Avoid all contact with wild animals
- Do not sleep with open unscreened windows or doors
- If bats are seen inside a house or other structure, close off the area and contact animal control. Once the bat(s) have been removed, close off any areas allowing entrance into the house.
- Do not leave pet food outside where it will attract wild animals
- Vaccinate all cats and dogs against rabies
- Report all animal exposures to your Animal Control program
- Report stray animals to your Animal Control program
- Obey leash laws

# # #
Developments in the Investigation of *E. coli* cases

(Santa Ana) – There have been several developments in the Orange County Health Care Agency’s on-going investigation of *E. coli* O157:H7 cases reported recently in Orange County.

The total number of confirmed cases among customers at the Foothill Ranch Souplantation is now 12 (ten people under 18 years of age and two adults). Confirmation of the 12th case was received late Friday night, April 6th. The individual is a juvenile who ate at the Foothill Ranch Souplantation restaurant on March 25th. This is outside the time period in which previously confirmed cases had reported eating at the restaurant (March 23rd or 24th). Tests to identify the strain of *E. coli* O157 in recently confirmed cases are pending.

The Health Care Agency (HCA) learned on Friday that one employee of the Foothill Ranch Souplantation tested positive for *E. coli* O157. This employee had not previously reported any symptoms or illness. Late Friday afternoon, Souplantation officials made a decision to voluntarily close the Foothill Ranch Souplantation because testing of all employees for *E. coli* infection has not been completed. HCA’s Public Health Laboratory is continuing to receive and process specimens over the weekend to expedite the employee testing process.

As a result of these developments, HCA Environmental Health has suspended the restaurant’s health permit to operate and will coordinate with restaurant representatives on necessary actions and steps to allow the facility to re-open.

“We still have not identified the source of these infections and we cannot draw any conclusions about the possible source from the latest developments,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “Our interviews with employees have shown that they also eat meals at the restaurant and an employee could have become infected in the same manner as others who ate at the restaurant.”

Any individuals who have eaten at the Foothill Ranch Souplantation restaurant and have developed symptoms such as diarrhea or bloody diarrhea should contact their physician and Orange County Public Health Epidemiology at (714) 834-8525 (weekend) or (714) 834-8180 (weekdays). Health care providers should also immediately report confirmed or suspect cases of *E. coli* O157, hemolytic uremic syndrome or positive shiga toxin testing to Public Health Epidemiology.
In response to customer and public concerns, Souplantation has established a toll free telephone number to address customer concerns or questions. The Souplantation customer service number is (800) 328-7761.
“Think. Don’t Drink” Town Hall to Address Underage Drinking

(Santa Ana) – By the time children in Orange County reach the 5th grade, 24% will have used alcohol, and that number increases to more than 59% by the time youth reach the 11th grade. To address the issue of underage drinking during Alcohol Awareness Month in April, a town hall event with the theme “Think. Don’t Drink: A Family Fun Night” will be held on Thursday, April 19 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Whitten Community Center located at 900 S. Melrose Ave. in Placentia.

Hosted by the City of Placentia Human Services, PAL® Peer Assistance Leadership Chapter of Valencia High School and the County of Orange Health Care Agency, Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT), the event will feature interactive educational booths and a panel of speakers who will discuss the dangers of underage drinking and prevention strategies.

The event will also include activities for the family to participate in together and attendees will have an opportunity to judge posters created by Valencia High School and Kramer Middle School students who participated in a Pal® youth poster contest based on the theme “Think. Don’t Drink.”

The problem of underage drinking has been documented by several recent studies. Research indicates that children who drink before the age of 15 are five times more likely to have alcohol problems when they reach adulthood. On the other hand, children and teens are less likely to abuse alcohol if parents are involved in their children’s lives, make and enforce clear rules, and are positive role models.

# # #
Health Permit for Foothill Ranch Souplantation Restaurant Reinstated

(Santa Ana) – The health permit for the Foothill Ranch Souplantation, 26572 Towne Center Dr., Lake Forest, has been reinstated following a re-inspection of the facility today by staff from the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) Environmental Health Food Protection Program.

HCA Environmental Health reinstated the health permit on April 19 following the completion of three requirements:

- Cleaning and sanitizing of all food contact surfaces in the facility
- Screening of all employees for *E. coli* O157 infection
- Disposal of all unpackaged food items handled by employees prior to screening

In addition, restaurant employees have attended a food worker education class presented by HCA Environmental Health.

Souplantation voluntarily closed the restaurant on April 6 and the health permit was suspended by HCA Environmental Health on April 7 as part of an on-going investigation of reported *E. coli* O157 cases. To date, 14 customers and one employee were confirmed through laboratory testing to have *E. coli* O157 infection. All of the customers reported eating at the facility during a three day period from March 23-25. The source of the *E. coli* O157 infections has not been identified. Environmental and food samples taken at the restaurant were all negative for the presence of *E. coli* O157.

# # #
Consumers Reminded to Check Their Freezers For Recalled Ground Beef Patties

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency reminds all consumers to check their freezers for ground beef patties that have been recalled due to possible contamination with E. coli O157:H7, a bacteria that can cause serious illness.

The recall of frozen ground beef patties produced by Merced-based Richwood Meat Company, Inc., was announced by the California Department of Health Services on April 20, 2007, after E. coli O157:H7 was detected in a product sample. The recalled ground beef patties were produced on April 28, 2006 and have been linked to several E. coli cases in Napa County. There have been no E. coli cases in Orange County associated with this product, but State officials are concerned that the ground beef patties might still be in some home freezers or even in retail stores.

The ground beef patties were marketed under several brands including Fireriver, Ritz Food Service, Chef’s Pride and Richwood Meat Company. A complete list of the recalled products is available on the California Department of Health Services website at www.dhs.ca.gov. The products should be thrown away or returned to their place of purchase, if known.

E. coli O157 infection can cause abdominal cramps and diarrhea, with some patients at risk for developing more severe complications that can include kidney failure. Those most at risk for severe complications include young children, older adults and those with compromised immune systems.

# # #
For Immediate Release
Thursday, May 3, 2007

Annual Mussel Quarantine & State Advisory Remain in Effect

(Santa Ana) – Consumers are reminded that the State Department of Health Services has added a ban on consumption of sport-harvested sardines, anchovies and bi-valve shellfish, as well as sport-harvested and commercially caught lobster and crab from Orange, Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties to the State’s Annual Mussel Quarantine that took effect April 20th.

Sport harvested means mussels, bi-valve (two-shelled) shellfish, sardines or anchovies that are caught by members of the public or any other person who is not a State-certified commercial harvester or dealer. Bi-valve shellfish sold by State-certified harvesters or dealers are subject to frequent mandatory testing and are not subject to this ban.

Orange County Environmental Health is providing notice of the quarantine to local food establishments that sell seafood. During routine inspections, Environmental Health staff will check these facilities to ensure their products are obtained from approved sources.

The actions taken by the State Department of Health Services are due to elevated levels of domoic acid in coastal waters resulting from a bloom of sea algae. State Health officials are concerned about the possibility of people contracting paralytic shellfish poisoning or domoic acid poisoning if the banned mussels, fish or shellfish are eaten. The algae bloom does not pose a danger to swimmers or others involved in ocean water contact recreation.
Nurse Recognition Week

(Santa Ana) – May 6-12 is recognized nationally as Nurse Recognition Week.

When an influenza pandemic happens, it will be important that we all take steps to stay healthy. This will include:

•Washing your hands
•Covering your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough
•Limiting contact with other people
•Treating those who are sick or may be sick with antiviral medications
•Caring for sick family members at home
•Avoiding crowded places and large gatherings of people

When used these steps, wearing a surgical mask or respirator may help prevent the spread of influenza.

# # #
Orange County Animal Care Center Hosts
Pet Fair 2007

(Santa Ana, CA) - Orange County Animal Care Services will host its annual Pet Fair event on Saturday, May 19, 2007, from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., at 561 The City Drive South, Orange. This year’s event invites prospective pet owners to ‘Take a Walk on the Wild Side’, and will showcase hundreds of beautiful animals available for adoption into loving homes.

In addition to the many wonderful animals available for adoption, the Care Center event will feature rescue organizations, animal related services, dog-training presentations, wildlife exhibits, and much, much more. Explorer Post 538 will be selling refreshments and making balloon animals throughout the event. Along with other giveaways, the first 20 dog adoptions will receive a free custom-made doghouse courtesy of Bark Busters.

“We invite animal lovers of all ages to celebrate this wonderful day with us,” said Jennifer Phillips, Director of Animal Care Services. “Pet Fair 2007 is a great opportunity for us to welcome our community, promote responsible pet ownership, highlight the many services we provide, and most importantly, find loving homes for the many animals in our care.”

Last year over 10,000 dogs, cats, rabbits and other lovable animals were adopted from the Animal Care Center. For further information on this event, contact Ryan Drabek at 714-935-6427.

# # #
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 17, 2007

Contact:
Deanne Thompson
(714) 834-2178

ORANGE COUNTY WOMAN IS A CHAMPION IN FIGHT AGAINST OBESITY

(Santa Ana) – A mother of six from Santa Ana will represent Orange County as a ‘Champion for Change’ at the unveiling of the new Network for a Healthy California (Network) public health campaign launched in Sacramento today by the California Department of Health Services. The Network recruited every day moms throughout the state who have become “champions” to help educate communities on ways to eat healthier and be more active.

Teresa Vazquez was selected to attend the Sacramento event by the Orange County Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative (NuPAC) due to her efforts to promote healthy eating and activities at Willard Intermediate School and in her community. “Nothing is more important to me than the health of my kids and family,” said Vazquez. “Too many of our kids are becoming overweight and are getting diabetes and other problems. Good health starts with a parent like me who understands the value of making changes in the kitchen and our overall lifestyle.”

California is facing an obesity epidemic, and the increase in the number of overweight youth is of special concern. In Orange County, over one-third of children from low-income families are overweight or at risk for becoming overweight. Reversing the rising rates of overweight and obesity is a public health priority. “Our community is affected by health problems as a result of poor eating habits and inactivity, so it is important to remember that everyone has the power to make a change in their families’ health,” said Maridet Ibanez, Nutrition Services manager for the County of Orange Health Care Agency.

By incorporating more fruits and vegetables in every meal and increasing physical activity every day, Californians can become Champions for Change and make a difference in their families’ health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. For more information and health tips, visit www.cachampionsforchange.net.

About The Network for a Healthy California (Network)
The Network for a Healthy California (Network) works with more than 300 different public, non-profit and business partners throughout the state to empower low-income Californians to consume the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables and enjoy physical activity every day. Principal funding is from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Stamp Program through the Network, which is a public health effort of the California Department of Health Services. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. For more information, visit the Network Web site at www.cachampionsforchange.net.
For Immediate Release
June 4, 2007

Notice of Ground Beef Recall

(Santa Ana) – Orange County consumers should check their freezers for ground beef products that were recalled June 3rd due to possible contamination with *E. coli* O157:H7, a bacterium that can cause a serious foodborne illness.

The ground beef was produced by United Food Group, LLC, and was distributed under several brand names. The labels of the products subject to recall bear the establishment number "EST. 1241" inside the USDA mark of inspection or printed on the package. All of the products have a sell by date of "May/06/07," a freeze by date of "May/07/07" or a produced on date of "April/20/07."

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the ground beef products were shipped to retail distribution centers in California, Arizona, Colorado, Oregon and Utah. Products subject to recall include:

- 10-pound casings of "MORAN'S All Natural, 73/27 fine ground beef"
- 10-pound casings of "MORAN'S All Natural, 90/10 fine ground sirloin"
- 2-pound chubs of "INTER-AMERICAN PRODUCTS 93/7 ground beef"
- 1-pound chubs of "INTER-AMERICAN PRODUCTS 80/20 ground beef"
- 1-pound chubs of "MORAN'S All Natural 73/27 ground beef"
- 5-pound chubs of "MORAN'S All Natural 73/27 ground beef"
- 3-pound chubs of "MORAN'S All Natural 73/27 ground beef"
- 1-pound chubs of "MORAN'S All Natural, 90/10 fine ground sirloin"
- 2-pound chubs of "MORAN'S All Natural 93/7 ground beef"
- 2-pound chubs of "MORAN'S All Natural 96/4 ground beef"
- 3-pound chubs of "STATER BROS. MARKETS 73/27 ground beef"

Consumers should return any of the products listed above to the store at which they were purchased.

# # #
WEST NILE VIRUS PRECAUTIONS URGED

(Santa Ana) – The first confirmed human West Nile Virus (WNV) infection in California in 2007 was reported in Kern County this week and serves as an important reminder to Orange County residents to take precautions against mosquito bites.

Twelve California counties have reported WNV activity in birds or mosquitoes in 2007, including Orange, Los Angeles, San Diego and Riverside. Mosquitoes can transmit the virus to humans and animals. Since the first human WNV infection in Orange County in 2004, the initial human cases in the county have occurred between mid-June and early July.

“Warm summer temperatures create ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes, increasing the risk for human West Nile Virus infections,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. People 50 years of age and older, and those with certain medical conditions including diseases that compromise the immune system, are at greater risk of severe complications from West Nile Virus infection.

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors
Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocved.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

# # #
For Immediate Release
Monday, July 2, 2007

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Health Advisory: High Temperatures Expected in Orange County

(Santa Ana) – With extremely high temperatures expected in Orange County this week, the Orange County Health Care Agency reminds individuals to take steps to prevent heat related illnesses.

“When temperatures are this high, and the heat index predicted to be even higher, extra precautions should taken by older adults, those with preexisting medical conditions like heart or lung disease, those with disabilities, children, and those who work outdoors,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “Prolonged exposure to the sun or excessive heat may cause serious conditions like heat exhaustion or heat stroke and can be fatal.”

To prevent heat related illnesses:

- **Stay cool indoors.** Use your air conditioner to cool your home. If you don’t have air conditioning, visit public facilities such as shopping malls and libraries to stay cool. A cool shower or bath is another effective way to cool off.

- **Drink more fluids, especially water.** Don’t wait until you are thirsty.

- **Check often on those at high-risk.** This includes older adults, those with chronic medical conditions, people with disabilities and children. Make sure their air conditioner is turned on, or offer to take them to a cooler place.

If you have to be outside in the heat, follow these recommendations:

- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing and a hat to provide shade from the sun.

- Avoid over-exertion and, whenever possible, schedule outdoor activities for the cooler part of the day.

- Never leave children, older adults or pets unattended in closed cars or other vehicles.

For more information on heat related illnesses, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or the California Department of Health Services at [www.dhs.ca.gov](http://www.dhs.ca.gov).

# # #
For Immediate Release

July 20, 2007

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Orange County Health Care Agency Earns Recognition for Emergency Preparedness

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency has been recognized by Project Public Health Ready for its preparations to respond to public health emergencies such as bioterrorism events, epidemics or natural disasters.

The Project Public Health Ready designation was awarded to Eric G. Handler, M.D., M.P.H, Orange County Health Officer, on July 12 during a recognition ceremony at the 2007 National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) Conference in Columbus, Ohio. Project Public Health Ready is a joint program of NACCHO and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Achievement of Project Public Health Ready status demonstrates excellence in three areas: emergency preparedness planning, staff training, and conducting emergency exercises. To be recognized, each applicant must meet all three of the national Project Public Health Ready criteria.

“The achievement of Project Public Health Ready recognition is the result of the hard work of each member of our Health Care Agency staff,” said Dr. Handler. “Preparing to respond to disasters and emergencies is a continuing process and we will continue working to improve our capabilities to respond to public health needs during a disaster. We also hope that every household and business in Orange County will do its part, starting with having its own emergency supply kit and emergency plan.”

To achieve Project Public Health Ready status, over 2,600 Health Care Agency employees were trained on emergency incident management and disaster response roles. In addition, almost 700 Public Health employees were certified through a Columbia University program as meeting basic Public Health emergency response competencies. Staff also participated in emergency exercises such as the Points of Distribution (POD) exercise in November 2006 during which flu shots were administered to the public at Cal State Fullerton, Golden West College and Saddleback Church.

The Orange County Health Care Agency is one of 139 health departments in the United States and one of five health departments in California that have achieved Project Public Health Ready status during the three years of the project. There are approximately 2,850 local health departments in the U.S. For more information on Project Public Health Ready, including a complete listing of all recognized sites, visit www.naccho.org/topics/emergency/pphr.cfm.

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For Immediate Release
July 24, 2007

New Name for Orange County Program
Dedicated to the Health of Adults 50+

(Santa Ana) – A Health Care Agency program that has provided health assessments and health education to over 4,700 Orange County adults in the past year has a new name reflecting its growing mission.

Preventive Health Care for Adults (PHCA) is the new name for the program once known as Preventive Health Care for the Aging. The new name was selected to be more representative of the expanded target population – adults 50 years of age and older, including “Baby Boomers.”

PHCA is funded by the County of Orange and the California Department of Public Health and is part of a statewide network of programs providing services to low income and ethnic minority seniors who have limited access to health care. The Orange County PHCA program began operations in 1976 and has assisted thousands of local residents in need of health care services. “Over the past 30 years, PHCA has provided free health assessments, screenings, health education, counseling, and referral to other services by public health nurses,” said Judy Ogan, PHCA Coordinator. “These free services can lead to the early detection of risk factors that contribute to chronic disease and help to link participants with service providers and community resources. Providing this type of support helps participants change their habits and behaviors so they may live healthier, more fulfilling lives and avoid the costs associated with chronic diseases.”

In the past year, over 60 percent of PHCA clients in Orange County received referrals for other needed services. Of those referred for a potential medical problem, about 90 percent of the referrals resulted in a new diagnosis or treatment, Ogan said.

For more information about the Orange County Preventive Health Care for Adults program or to make an appointment for PHCA services, please call (714) 972-3745.

# # #
Orange County Reports First Human
West Nile Virus Infection of 2007

(Santa Ana) – A 44-year-old South Orange County man has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) infection, becoming the County’s first reported human WNV infection in 2007.

The infection was identified through routine screening tests performed when the man donated blood earlier this month. Donated blood is routinely screened for WNV infection to ensure the safety of the blood supply. The man may have acquired the infection outside of Orange County. The Orange County Health Care Agency received notification of the test results on July 26.

“As the temperature rises during the summer months, the risk of West Nile Virus infection also increases,” says Dr. Eric G. Handler, County Health Officer. “The best way to avoid West Nile Virus infection is to take precautionary measures to avoid mosquito bites.”

Last year, 7 confirmed human West Nile Virus infections were reported in Orange County while statewide, 292 human WNV infections were reported with 7 WNV-related deaths. There were no fatalities in Orange County in 2006 as a result of WNV.

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors
Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus will experience symptoms of West Nile fever, which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

# # #
For Immediate Release
August 10, 2007

Contact: Deanne Thompson
(714) 834-2178

Consumers Warned Not To Eat Raw Oysters from the Hood Canal area of Washington State

(Santa Ana) – Orange County health officials are warning consumers not to eat raw or undercooked oysters harvested from the southern part of the Hood Canal in Washington State after a number of human illnesses caused by *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, a harmful bacteria, occurred in people who ate the oysters.

At least fourteen confirmed or suspected *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* cases have been reported in California involving people who ate oysters, including three cases in Orange County. The Orange County cases were all adults who have recovered from their illnesses and did not require hospitalization. No deaths have been reported in California as a result of these illnesses.

“Consumers should thoroughly cook raw oysters from any source before eating them in order to reduce the risk of illness,” said Dr. Eric Handler, Orange County Health Officer. The California Department of Public Health recommends that oysters be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 145° F in order to destroy the bacteria. This can be done by boiling the oysters until the shells open and allowing them to continue to boil for an additional three to five minutes.

*Vibrio parahaemolyticus* can cause symptoms such as watery diarrhea, abdominal cramps, headache, fever and chills. Symptoms may begin within hours to a few days after eating raw or undercooked contaminated shellfish, particularly oysters, and most people recover in a few days without treatment. More severe cases may require medical treatment, which may include hospitalization. Children and persons with compromised immune systems or chronic liver disease should avoid eating raw or undercooked oysters from any source.

The Washington State Department of Health has recalled oysters harvested in the southern part of the Hood Canal from July 3 through August 3. However, some of the recalled oysters had previously been distributed in California. Orange County Health Care Agency Environmental Health inspectors are checking local food facilities for the oysters. Consumers and retailers should contact their place of purchase or shellfish supplier if they have questions about the source of oysters they may have purchased or whether they are part of the recall.

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Health Advisory: Temperatures Over 100° Forecast for Some Areas of Orange County on Tuesday

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency reminds individuals to take steps to prevent heat related illnesses, as the National Weather Service has predicted high temperatures exceeding 100° for some areas of Orange County beginning Tuesday, August 14th.

“The current forecast is calling for some of the hottest daytime temperatures so far this Summer, so extra precautions should taken by older adults, those with preexisting medical conditions like heart or lung disease, those with disabilities, children, and those who work outdoors,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “Prolonged exposure to excessive temperatures may cause serious conditions like heat exhaustion or heat stroke and can be fatal.”

To prevent heat related illnesses:

- **Stay cool indoors.** Use your air conditioner to cool your home. If you don’t have air conditioning, visit public facilities such as shopping malls and libraries to stay cool. Do not rely on electric fans as your primary cooling device during a heat wave. When the temperature is in the high 90’s or higher, a fan will not prevent heat-related illness. A cool shower or bath is a more effective way to cool off.

- **Drink more fluids, especially water.** Don’t wait until you are thirsty.

- **Check often on those at high-risk.** This includes older adults, those with chronic medical conditions, people with disabilities and children. Make sure their air conditioner is turned on, or offer to take them to a cooler place.

If you have to be outside in the heat, follow these recommendations:

- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing and a hat to provide shade from the sun. Use sunscreen.

- Avoid over-exertion and schedule outdoor activities for the cooler part of the day.

- Never leave children, older adults or pets unattended in closed cars or other vehicles.

For more information on heat related illnesses, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or the California Department of Public Health at [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov).

# # #
Endemic Typhus Cases Reported in Orange County

(Santa Ana) – Three human cases of endemic (murine) typhus have recently been reported to the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA), with health officials advising the public to reduce their risk of the illness by controlling fleas in and around their homes and keeping their homes and yards free of conditions that attract wild animals.

Of the reported cases, two are residents of Westminster (one adult and one juvenile) and the other is a resident of Huntington Beach (an adult). While all three were initially hospitalized for treatment of the illness, they have since been released from the hospital and are recovering.

Endemic typhus occurs naturally in Southern California, with two cases reported in Orange County earlier this year. In addition, cases have been reported in recent years in the City of Long Beach and other locations in Los Angeles County. Endemic typhus is transmitted by the bite of infected fleas that may be found on opossums, rodents and cats. Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle ache and rash. It is not transmitted from person to person, and is treatable with antibiotics. Diagnosis of typhus is made through a blood test.

Orange County residents can help prevent typhus cases by taking simple precautions around their home and yard. These precautions include:

- Treating pets and other domestic animals regularly with flea prevention medication
- Avoiding contact with opossums, rodents, feral cats and other animals that could harbor fleas
- Sealing off openings to attics and crawl spaces and keeping vent screens in good repair to prevent wild animals from gaining access to houses and other structures
- Reporting dead opossums, cats or other animals to your local Animal Control agency for removal
- Removing or trimming overgrown vegetation or ground cover where wild animals may hide or nest
- Keeping trash cans covered at all times and eliminating outdoor food and water sources including pet food, bird feeders, and fallen fruit from trees.

# # #
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 15, 2007

Contact: Jennifer Phillips
(714) 935-7107

Orange County Animal Care Services Hosts Free Pet Adoption Event

(Santa Ana, CA) - Orange County Animal Care Services (OCACS) will host its first ever ‘Find a Forever Friend for Free’ pet adoption event on Saturday and Sunday, August 18-19, 2007, at 561 The City Drive South, in Orange. The event will showcase hundreds of beautiful animals available for adoption into loving homes.

For one weekend only, OCACS will offer a ‘Forever Friend for Free’ to visitors looking to adopt a new pet. Utilizing generous donations from the public, OCACS is waiving all adoption fees on animals, other than ID microchips and dog licensing, limited to one pet adoption per household. This is a unique opportunity for families that may be looking to adopt a playful dog, a cute kitty, or a cuddly rabbit to ‘Find a Forever Friend’ and bring them home for free.

“This is another opportunity for us to continue to serve and give back to the citizens of Orange County and the animals we care for on a daily basis,” said Jennifer Phillips, Director of Animal Care Services. “Our ‘Find a Forever Friend for Free’ event will be a weekend to remember and one that you do not want to miss!”

Last year over 10,000 dogs, cats, rabbits and other lovable animals were adopted from Orange County Animal Care Services. For further information on this event, contact Jennifer Phillips at 714-935-7107.

# # #
For Immediate Release
August 17, 2007

Orange County Confirms First
Human West Nile Virus Cases of 2007

(Santa Ana) – A 30-year-old resident of Anaheim and a 21-year-old resident of Fullerton have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) infection, becoming the County’s first confirmed symptomatic human WNV cases in 2007, according to County Health Officer Dr. Eric G. Handler.

- The 30-year-old man became ill mid-July with symptoms of West Nile Fever. He was not hospitalized and is recovering at home. He most likely acquired infection outside of Orange County.
- The 21-year-old woman first experienced symptoms of West Nile Fever the last week of July. She was hospitalized for treatment and is recovering at home.

An asymptomatic WNV infection was reported earlier this year in a blood donor who was identified through routine blood screening at the time of donation.

This year in California 110 people in 19 counties have been reported with illness due to West Nile Virus and 5 WNV-related fatalities have been reported. Last year, 7 confirmed human cases of West Nile Virus infection were reported in Orange County while statewide, 278 human WNV cases were reported with 7 WNV-related deaths.

“It is important for the community to recognize that West Nile Virus is endemic in Orange County, recurring every year during the summer months and continuing into the fall,” said Dr. Handler. “The best way to avoid West Nile Virus infection is to take precautionary measures to avoid mosquito bites.”

Recommended WNV precautions include:
- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition

-More-
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus will experience symptoms of West Nile fever, which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops the more serious symptoms of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

# # #
For Immediate Release
August 28, 2007

Contact:
Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Health Care Agency Urges Precautions to Prevent
Bats from Entering Your Home

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency has received a number of phone calls
this year from area residents who are concerned about bats that have entered their homes.

Several species of bats are native to Orange County and bats are beneficial to the ecosystem for
many reasons, including their consumption of insects. However, bats can carry rabies, a virus of
great concern to people and animals.

“Many of our recent calls have been from people who have found bats in their homes,” said
Hildy Meyers, M.D., Medical Director of Public Health Epidemiology. “In these cases, the bats
most likely flew into the homes through an open door or window. We encourage all Orange
County residents to make sure their doors and windows have proper screens that will keep bats
and other animals as well as insects, like mosquitoes, out of their homes.”

Since bats can squeeze into very small spaces, steps should be taken to bat-proof the exterior of
your home or other buildings on your property. This includes closing all outside openings larger
than 3/8” inch by using mesh, netting, caulking or other sealants.

In 2007, five (5) bats found in Orange County have tested positive for rabies. This is
approximately 9% of all of the bats submitted for testing, about the same percentage of positive
rabies tests as reported in previous years.

The best advice is to never touch a bat with your bare hands, even if it appears to be dead.
Anyone who has been bitten or scratched by a bat should seek medical attention immediately. If
you observe a bat in your home, confine it to one unoccupied room of the house and call your
local animal control agency. Animal control officers will remove the bat from the home for
testing. Animal control should also be notified if you observe a bat that is acting abnormally
during daylight hours. It is very important to make sure that your pets are currently vaccinated to
protect them from rabies.

Potential exposure to a bat should be reported to Orange County Public Health Epidemiology at
(714) 834-8180. This includes bare handed contact with a bat, sleeping in the same room in
which a bat is found or finding a bat in the room of an unattended child.

# # #
Health Advisory: High Temperatures Expected in Orange County

(Santa Ana) – Temperatures throughout Orange County are expected to be over 90° for the next several days, increasing the risk of heat related illnesses like heat exhaustion and heat stroke for those who are more sensitive to the effects of high temperatures.

“The current forecast is calling for some of the hottest daytime temperatures so far this Summer, so extra precautions should taken by older adults, those with preexisting medical conditions like heart or lung disease, those with disabilities, children, and those who work outdoors,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “Prolonged exposure to excessive temperatures may cause serious conditions like heat exhaustion or heat stroke and can be fatal.”

To prevent heat related illnesses:

- **Stay cool indoors.** Use your air conditioner to cool your home. If you don’t have air conditioning, visit public facilities such as shopping malls and libraries to stay cool. Do not rely on electric fans as your primary cooling device during a heat wave. When the temperature is in the high 90’s or higher, a fan will not prevent heat-related illness. A cool shower or bath is a more effective way to cool off.

- **Drink more fluids, especially water.** Don’t wait until you are thirsty.

- **Check often on those at high-risk.** This includes older adults, those with chronic medical conditions, people with disabilities and children. Make sure their air conditioner is turned on, or offer to take them to a cooler place.

If you have to be outside in the heat, follow these recommendations:

- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing and a hat to provide shade from the sun. Use sunscreen.

- Avoid over-exertion and schedule outdoor activities for the cooler part of the day.

- Never leave children, older adults or pets unattended in closed cars or other vehicles.

For more information on heat related illnesses, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or the California Department of Public Health at [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov).

# # #
For Immediate Release
Saturday, September 1

Contact:
Howard Sutter
(714) 720-1462

Excessive Heat Warning Issued for Areas of Orange County
this Labor Day Weekend

(Santa Ana) – The National Weather Service has issued an Excessive Heat Warning for areas of Orange County effective Saturday and Sunday, September 1-2 and Orange County residents are urged to take precautions to prevent heat related illnesses.

“The Labor Day weekend means backyard barbecues, outdoor activities and many special events,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “This Labor Day, it will be especially important to stay cool and drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids to prevent serious heat related illnesses. Extra precautions are especially needed for older adults, those with preexisting medical conditions like heart or lung disease, those with disabilities, children, and those who may be working outdoors.”

For those who may not have air conditioning, the State of California has opened a Cooling Center at the Orange County Fairgrounds, 88 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa. According to the State, the Orange County Fairgrounds Cooling Center will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. each day through Tuesday, September 4. The Governor’s Office of Emergency Services has also established a toll free number for the public to get information on how to protect themselves from the hot weather. That number is (877) 435-7021 and it will be available through Tuesday, September 4. For information on other places to stay cool in Orange County, you can also call 2-1-1. If you are calling from a cell phone, dial (888) 600-4357.

Prolonged exposure to excessive temperatures may cause serious conditions like heat exhaustion or heat stroke and can even be fatal. Symptoms of heat exhaustion may include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, weakness, headache, nausea or vomiting and dizziness. Warning signs of heat stroke may include an extremely high body temperature, unconsciousness, confusion, hot and dry skin (no sweating), a rapid, strong pulse, and a throbbing headache. If symptoms of heat stroke occur, immediately call for medical assistance. Move the person to a shady area and begin cooling their body with water.

Recommended precautions to prevent heat related illnesses include:

- Staying cool indoors. Use your air conditioner to cool your home. If you don’t have air conditioning, visit public facilities, such as cooling centers or shopping malls, to stay cool. Do not rely on electric fans as your primary cooling device during a heat wave. When the

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temperature is in the high 90’s or higher, a fan will not prevent heat-related illness. A cool shower or bath is a more effective way to cool off.

- **Drinking more fluids, especially water.** Don’t wait until you are thirsty.
- **Checking often on those at high-risk.** This includes older adults, those with chronic medical conditions, people with disabilities, those who take certain medications and children. Make sure their air conditioner is turned on, or offer to take them to a cooler place.

If you have to be outside in the heat, follow these recommendations:

- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing and a hat to provide shade from the sun. Use sunscreen.
- Avoid over-exertion and schedule outdoor activities for the cooler part of the day. Spend as much time as possible in the shade.
- Never leave children, older adults or pets unattended in closed cars or other vehicles. Remember that your pets need extra water and shade, too.

For more information on heat related illnesses, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or the California Department of Public Health at [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov).

# # #
Alerta a los Residentes del Condado de Orange a No Utilizar Ciertas Loncheras que Contienen Plomo

(Santa Ana) – La Agencia de Salud del Condado de Orange está aconsejando a los residentes descontinuar el uso de las loncheras que han probado positivo para niveles elevados de plomo. Las loncheras, que fueron utilizadas como artículos educativos de nutrición, fueron proporcionadas por el Departamento Estatal de Salud Pública (CDPH) a 105 socios a través del estado, incluyendo a la Agencia de Salud del Condado de Orange. Las loncheras fueron distribuidas a los consumidores en una variedad de lugares, incluyendo tiendas y clínicas de nutrición.

Mientras no ha resultado hasta el momento ningún caso de envenenamiento por plomo por el uso de las loncheras, el Departamento Estatal de Salud Pública (CDPH) ha aconsejado que los consumidores devuelvan las loncheras al lugar en donde las consiguieron o las lleven a su centro local de colección de los desechos peligrosos del hogar (HHWCC) para su disposición. Los residentes del condado de Orange pueden regresar las loncheras a la oficina de la Agencia de Salud del Condado de Orange localizada en Santa Ana o a una de las siguientes cuatro localidades del Centro de colección de desechos peligrosos del hogar (HHWCC):

- **Agencia de Salud del Condado de Orange, Escritorio de Información / Cajera**– 1725 W. 17th Street, Santa Ana, 92706 de 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Lunes a Viernes
- **Anaheim HHWCC** - 1071 N. Blue Gum Street, Anaheim, 92806, de 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Martes a Sábado
- **Huntington Beach HHWCC** – 17121 Nichols Street, Huntington Beach, 92647, de 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Martes a Sábado
- **Irvine HHWCC** – 6411 Oak Canyon, Irvine, 92618, de 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Martes a Sábado
- **San Juan Capistrano HHWCC** – 32250 La Pata Avenue, San Juan Capistrano, 92675, de 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Martes a Sábado
Las loncheras del Departamento Estatal de Salud Publica (CDPH) que resultaron con altos niveles de plomo fueron obtenidas a través de la compañía TA Creations que tienen sus empresas en Canton, China. La imagen de las loncheras esta en las siguientes fotos.

Para más información sobre el envenenamiento por plomo los consumidores pueden contactar a la Agencia de Salud del Condado de Orange al 1- 800-564-8448. Información adicional y una lista sobre la prevención de envenenamiento por plomo están disponibles en la pagina de Internet del Departamento Estatal de Salud Publica (CDPH)
http://www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/discond/Pages/CLPPBChildrenAtRisk.aspx
Orange County Residents Warned Not to Use Lunchboxes that Contain Lead

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency is advising residents to stop using lunchboxes that have tested positive for elevated levels of lead. The lunchboxes, which were used as nutrition education tools, were provided by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to 105 partners throughout the State, including the Orange County Health Care Agency. The lunchboxes were distributed to consumers through a variety of venues, including retail stores and nutrition clinics.

While no known cases of lead poisoning have resulted from use of the lunchboxes, CDPH has advised that consumers return them to the place where they got them, or take them to their local household hazardous waste collection center (HHWCC) for disposal. Orange County residents may return the lunchboxes to the Orange County Health Care Agency in Santa Ana or one of four local HHWCC locations:

- **Orange County Health Care Agency, Cashier’s Desk** – 1725 W. 17th Street, Santa Ana, 92706
  8:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday

- **Anaheim HHWCC** – 1071 N. Blue Gum Street, Anaheim, 92806, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Tuesday through Saturday

- **Huntington Beach HHWCC** – 17121 Nichols Street, Huntington Beach, 92647, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Tuesday through Saturday

- **Irvine HHWCC** – 6411 Oak Canyon, Irvine, 92618, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Tuesday through Saturday

- **San Juan Capistrano HHWCC** – 32250 La Pata Avenue, San Juan Capistrano, 92675, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Tuesday through Saturday

The CDPH lunch boxes that tested positive for lead were obtained through a manufacturer, TA Creations, which has factories in Canton, China. All items are pictured below.
For more information about lead poisoning, consumers are advised to contact the Orange County Health Care Agency at 800-564-8448. Additional information and a list of local childhood lead prevention programs are available at the CDPH’s web site at http://www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/discond/Pages/CLPPBChildrenAtRisk.aspx
Animals Confiscated from Santa Ana Pet Store Available for Adoption This Saturday

(Santa Ana) – Orange County Animal Care Services (OCACS) announced today the availability of approximately 50 puppies, 6 kittens, 18 rabbits, and 1 guinea pig that were confiscated from a Santa Ana pet store in August. The adoption event will take place this Saturday, September 22, 2007 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at 561 The City Drive South in Orange. The animals have received excellent care, love, and attention from OCACS staff and are ready to be adopted into forever homes.

The animals will be on public view from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Orange County residents can enter a drawing for the animals they are interested in adopting. Drawings will begin at 12 p.m. and continue until all animals have been adopted. Each family will have an opportunity to enter the drawing for each animal available, although there will be a one animal limit per family. Upon being selected to adopt, the happy new owners will need to be prepared to pay all adoption fees that include the price of adoption, all vaccinations, an ID microchip, and spay or neuter surgery.

“Bring your family and friends to OCACS on Saturday for this rare event,” said Jennifer Phillips, Director of OCACS. “Enjoy the morning visiting with these wonderful animals and the many others available at OCACS. Enter the drawing and you may end up taking home a new forever friend!”

Last year over 10,000 dogs, cats, rabbits and other loveable animals were adopted from OCACS. For further information on this event, contact Ryan Drabek at 714-935-6427.

###
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, October 22, 2007

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Smoke from Santiago Fire in Orange County Poses Potential Public Health Danger

(Santa Ana) – Smoke from the Santiago fire in Orange County may pose a health danger to some individuals, especially those in certain high-risk groups. In addition, expected high temperatures associated with Santa Ana wind conditions may also contribute to the public health danger.

“Among those who can be most directly affected by smoke exposure are individuals with heart disease, those with lung or respiratory diseases like asthma, older adults, children and pregnant women,” said County Health Officer Dr. Eric Handler. “Air pollution levels from the fire can change rapidly, depending on weather conditions, so we recommend that individuals in these high-risk groups take precautions until the situation is over.”

Residents of areas affected by drifting smoke should limit outdoor activity and physical exertion.

Other recommendations include:

- Keep the windows and doors in your home closed, and use your air conditioner on the re-circulate mode, if available, to limit the intake of outdoor air and keep your home comfortable.
- Seek medical attention if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue.
- Follow an asthma management plan, making sure those with asthma have at least a five-day supply of medication on hand.

The Santa Ana wind conditions contributing to the fire have also brought unseasonably warm temperatures. Recommendations to prevent heat related illnesses include:

- Avoid unnecessary sun exposure and unnecessary exertion.
- Drink plenty of water; don’t wait until you are thirsty.
- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing.
- Never leave children, elderly people or pets unattended in closed cars or other vehicles.
- Check on those who are at high risk to make sure they are staying cool – including seniors who live alone, people with heart or lung disease, and young children.

# # #
Orange County Flu Shot Clinics Begin October 29

(Santa Ana) - The Orange County Health Care Agency’s (HCA) seasonal flu shot clinics begin October 29 at locations throughout the county, with HCA encouraging those in high-risk groups to receive a flu shot to increase their protection against influenza and its potential complications.

Information about locations, dates and times is available by calling the HCA Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 or by visiting the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com/public/flu. HCA’s program provides free flu shots to eligible individuals including:

- People 50 years of age and older
- People with chronic disease like heart disease, asthma, and other lung diseases, as well as those with health conditions that suppress their immune or respiratory system
- Health care workers
- Women who will be pregnant during flu season
- Children aged 6 months until their 5th birthday
- Children or adolescents receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- Anyone living with or caring for children under 5 years or adults over 50 years
- Anyone living with or caring for people with medical conditions that place them at higher risk of complications from flu.

“Receiving a flu shot is an effective measure in preventing the flu,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “This is an ideal time to become vaccinated against the flu, as the flu season in Orange County often peaks near the end of December or beginning of January and can last until April.”

Those not eligible for the county program can obtain a flu shot from doctor’s offices, pharmacies and health care clinics. For assistance in finding a flu shot, visit the American Lung Association website at www.flucliniclocator.org.

# # #
For Immediate Release
October 29, 2007

Contact:
Deanne Thompson
or Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Get a Free Flu Shot on November 2nd

(Santa Ana) – Free flu shots for adults and children will be offered November 2nd at two Orange County locations as part of a continuing series of emergency exercises testing the county’s ability to hold several mass vaccination clinics at the same time.

The free flu shots will be offered November 2nd from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at:

- Soka University, 1 University Drive, Aliso Viejo 92656 (Enter University Drive off Wood Canyon Drive)
- Cypress College, 9200 Valley View Street, Cypress 90630 (Walk-up - Enter from Holder Street at Lakeshore Dr., Drive-through enter on Orange Ave.)

Flu shots will be provided at no cost to adults and children six months of age and older. The Soka University site will primarily offer drive-through flu shots with walk-up flu shots also available, while the Cypress College site will offer both walk-up and drive-through flu shots. To receive a flu shot, participants should be feeling well on the day of the flu shot exercise and must complete a brief health screening to ensure they can safely receive a flu shot.

“Last year’s flu shot exercise was a tremendous success and we hope to give more than 5,000 free flu shots during this year’s event,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “Not only will people receive a free flu shot, they will also be helping the County and our community partners improve our capabilities to respond in the event of a public health emergency.”

Among the organizations helping to stage the vaccination clinics are the cities of Aliso Viejo, Cypress, Laguna Hills, Laguna Niguel and Laguna Woods; Soka University and Cypress College; the Orange County Health Care Agency; the Children and Families Commission of Orange County; the Orange County Fire Authority; the Orange County Sheriff’s Department; the American Red Cross-Orange County Chapter; and the Coalition of Orange County Community Clinics.

An annual flu shot is the best way to prevent influenza, which affects 5% to 20% of the U.S. population each year. Some groups, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at higher risk for serious flu complications.

# # #
Plan for Additional Mental Health Services Act Funding
Now Available for Public Review and Comment

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency’s plan to seek an additional $1.3 million in Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) one-time funding for program expansion during Fiscal Year 2007-2008 is now available for public review and comment during a 30-day period that ends December 8, 2007.

The plan details how one-time funding will be used for expanded programs to serve adults with serious mental illness. Copies of the plan and executive summary are available on the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com/prop63/css/. The executive summary and a public comment form are also available.

The California Department of Mental Health notified counties that additional one-time funding is available through the Community Services and Supports component of the Mental Health Services Act. The Orange County plan was developed based on the existing unmet needs in programs that have been already approved by the Orange County Board of Supervisors and the California Department of Mental Health.

For more information or to obtain a hard copy of the growth funding plan, contact the MHSA Office at (714) 834-2907.
For Immediate Release
November 9, 2007

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Revocation of Paramedic Receiving Center Designation
for Tustin Hospital and Medical Center

(Santa Ana) – Orange County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) today revoked the Paramedic Receiving Center (PRC) designation for Tustin Hospital and Medical Center, effective immediately.

The action was taken in the interest of patient safety after the hospital’s administration reported they were unable to staff their Emergency Department with qualified staff. Under this action, 9-1-1 response patients will not be transported to Tustin Hospital and Medical Center by ambulance and will instead be taken to other area PRC’s. Orange County EMS is also recommending that private Basic Life Support ambulance patients also be transported to other area hospitals.

Tustin Hospital and Medical Center had previously notified the California Department of Public Health of their intent to close their Emergency Department on December 29, 2007. Orange County EMS is in the process of completing its impact analysis on the proposed closure of the Tustin Hospital Emergency Department, which will be submitted to the State. While not in final format, the preliminary Orange County EMS impact analysis indicates that closure of the Emergency Department will have minimal impact on the delivery of pre-hospital emergency medical care in the County.

Orange County EMS is notifying area hospitals, ambulance service providers, fire departments and area law enforcement agencies of this action to ensure that patients are transported to appropriate facilities.

# # #
For Immediate Release
November 13, 2007

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Season's First Influenza Case Confirmed

(Santa Ana) - The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) has confirmed its first influenza case of the 2007-08 season, signaling a later start to the flu season than recorded last year.

This season’s first confirmed influenza case was a juvenile from South Orange County who tested positive in early November for influenza type B. The case was reported to the County through a network of physicians who provide information about influenza activity in the community. In 2006, the first influenza case was reported in September. “Flu season in Orange County often peaks in December or later and can last until April,” said Dr. Eric G. Handler, County Health Officer. “Now is the time to get a flu shot and benefit from the protection it provides, especially for those at higher risk of influenza complications.”

Information about the Health Care Agency’s annual flu shot program is available by calling the Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 or by visiting the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com. HCA’s program provides free flu shots to eligible individuals including:

- People 50 years of age and older
- People with chronic disease like heart disease, asthma, and other lung diseases, as well as those with health conditions that suppress their immune or respiratory system
- Health care workers
- Women who will be pregnant during flu season
- Children aged 6 months until their 5th birthday
- Children or adolescents receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- Anyone living with or caring for children under 5 years or adults over 50 years
- Anyone living with or caring for people with medical conditions that place them at higher risk of complications from flu.

Those not eligible for the county program can obtain a flu shot from doctor’s offices, pharmacies and health care clinics. For assistance in finding a flu shot, visit the American Lung Association website at www.flucliniclocator.org.

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Health Care Agency Statement Regarding Settlement Of Medicare Billing Issues

(Santa Ana) – The County of Orange Board of Supervisors has approved a settlement agreement with the Federal Government resolving claims that the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) incorrectly billed the Medicare program between 1990 and 1999. These billing issues did not impact services provided to clients.

Under the agreement terms, the Health Care Agency will repay $7 million and enter into a three year agreement that specifies other requirements. The County reserved funds in 2001 from HCA budget savings to cover the settlement amount.

Since 2000, the Agency has implemented comprehensive measures to ensure that it accurately bills Medicare for services provided. The Health Care Agency has fully redesigned its clinical documentation and billing processes to ensure that all services provided are properly documented and that billing is submitted in an accurate manner.

Furthermore, in 2000, the Health Care Agency voluntarily established an agencywide compliance program to ensure that the agency follows all local, state, federal and health care industry laws and regulations. This compliance program has served as a model for other county compliance programs in California.

“The terms of the settlement with the Federal Government acknowledge our efforts to implement an agencywide compliance program and to improve our billing process. The three year agreement length is less than the five years usually required in settlements of this type,” said Jeff Nagel, Ph.D., Health Care Agency Chief Compliance Officer. “The Federal Government has also waived the usual requirement for an external auditor to review the elements of the compliance program.”

“The Health Care Agency is pleased to reach a conclusion of this issue, which arose from matters that occurred in the 1990s,” said Julie Poulson, Health Care Agency Director. “Our Compliance Program has become a key element of how our agency operates. It is the right thing to do.”

###
Need Help with That New Year’s Resolution to Quit Smoking?

(Santa Ana) – If your New Year’s Resolution to quit smoking has turned out to be more difficult than you expected, there’s free help available from the Orange County Health Care Agency’s Tobacco Use Prevention Program.

Free smoking cessation services are provided at a number of convenient locations throughout Orange County, with more information available by calling 1-866-NEW-LUNG (866-639-5864). Services include smoking cessation classes, telephone counseling, support groups and one-on-one counseling. Many services are offered in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

“We know that it is not easy to quit smoking, and that’s why we want people to know that help is available,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. In addition to those who have made a New Year’s Resolution to quit, there may be others who need help quitting in order to comply with a new State law that prohibits smoking in a motor vehicle when a minor (17 years old and under) is present. A violation of the “Smoke Free Cars with Minors” law is punishable by a fine of up to $100. “By quitting smoking you will not only improve your own health, you will improve the health of others around you who may have been exposed to secondhand smoke,” stated Dr. Handler.
the Health Care Agency’s website at ochealthinfo.com/epi/typhus and has been distributed to Orange County hospitals, urgent care centers and interested health care providers. Information is also available by calling the Health Care Agency’s Health Referral Line at 800-564-8448.

# # #
Endemic Typhus Cases on the Increase in Orange County

(Santa Ana) – Endemic (flea-borne) typhus, an illness that prior to 2006 was considered rare in Orange County, is on the increase, with six confirmed or probable endemic typhus cases reported to the Orange County Health Care Agency in the first few weeks of 2008.

Of the recent cases, four are adults and two are under 18 years of age. The individuals live in Huntington Beach, Fountain Valley and Placentia. Endemic typhus is transmitted by the bite of infected fleas that may be found on cats, opossums, and rodents. Because cats and opossums are present throughout the County, human cases may occur in any area. Typhus occurs naturally in Southern California, with six cases reported in Orange County during 2007 and one in 2006. Prior to 2006, the last case reported in Orange County was in 1993. Cases have also been reported in recent years in the City of Long Beach and other areas of Los Angeles County.

Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle ache and rash, and many of the recent cases have reported having fever for a number of days before being diagnosed. Typhus is not transmitted from person to person, and is treatable with antibiotics. Diagnosis is made through a blood test. Controlling fleas in and around your home is the key to preventing typhus. Orange County residents can help prevent typhus cases by:

- Treating pets and other domestic animals regularly with flea prevention medications
- Avoiding contact with opossums, rodents, feral cats and other animals that could have fleas
- Sealing off openings to attics and crawl spaces and keeping vent screens in good repair to prevent wild animals from gaining access to houses and other structures
- Reporting dead opossums, cats or other animals to your local Animal Control agency for removal
- Removing or trimming overgrown vegetation or ground cover where wild animals may hide or nest
- Keeping trash cans covered at all times and eliminating outdoor food and water sources including pet food, bird feeders, and fallen fruit from trees.

The Orange County Health Care Agency is coordinating the investigation of reported typhus cases with the Orange County Vector Control District. Information about typhus is available on
For Immediate Release  
January 30, 2008

Contact:  
Deanne Thompson  
(714) 834-2178

Precautions Urged for Travel Associated with Lunar New Year – Tieng Viet

(Santa Ana) – People traveling for the Lunar New Year to countries where avian influenza A (H5N1) cases have been reported are urged to take precautions before, during and after their travel.

Before traveling abroad, visit the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov/travel for current travel health information. Make sure all of your routine and travel-related vaccinations are up-to-date and you have medications to prevent malaria if you are traveling to a malaria-endemic area. Pack a travel health kit containing your routine medications, basic first aid supplies, insect repellant and alcohol-based hand gels to clean your hands. Do not travel if you are sick.

The celebration of the Lunar New Year results in increased travel between the United States and many Asian countries. Human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1), or bird flu, have been reported in Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam. Additional countries in Asia, Europe and Africa have reported H5N1 infections in birds. While there are not any restrictions on travel to these countries, certain precautions are recommended:

- During travel, avoid direct contact with birds, including poultry and wild birds and do not visit poultry farms or bird markets where live birds are kept. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand gels for hand cleaning when soap and water is not available. Make sure that all poultry products, including eggs, are thoroughly cooked before eating.

- After returning, monitor your health for 10 days. If you develop a fever plus cough, sore throat or trouble breathing, contact your physician and provide information about...
your symptoms, where you traveled and if you had direct contact with poultry or with sick people.

- Orange County physicians treating patients with respiratory symptoms who have traveled to areas with avian influenza A (H5N1) cases in humans or birds in the 10 days prior to the onset of symptoms should contact Public Health immediately at (714) 834-8180 for appropriate testing.

  To protect their overall health, travelers should take additional precautions such as prevention of mosquito bites, avoiding contaminated food and water, and avoiding contact with animals. See the CDC travel website for more information.

  # # #
Thống Cáo Bảo Chí
Xin lập tức phổ biến
January 30, 2008

Liên lạc: Deanne Thompson
(714) 834-2178

Khuyến Thận Trong Khi Du Lịch Nhận Dịp Tết Nguyên Đán

(Santa Ana) – Những người đi du lịch được khuyến khích thân tròng trước, đang, và sau chuyến du lịch của họ vào dịp Tết Nguyên Đán đến các quốc gia có những báo cáo trường hợp bị bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1).


Để đón mừng Năm Mới Âm Lịch, lượng khách du lịch đã tăng gấp giữa Hoa Kỳ và nhiều quốc gia Châu Á. Những trường hợp người bị mắc bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1) hay bệnh cúm của loài vật có cảnh đã được báo cáo tại Azerbaijan, Căm Bốt, Trung Hoa, Djibouti, Ai Cập, Nam Dương, Iraq, Cộng Hoà Lào, Miền Điền, Nigeria, Pakistan, Thái Lan, Thổ Nhĩ Kỳ và Việt Nam. Ngoài ra tại những quốc gia Châu Á, ở Châu Âu và Châu Phi khác cũng đã có báo cáo việc lây bệnh H5N1 ngoại các loài vật có cảnh. Mặc dù không có bất cứ hạn chế nào khi thăm viếng các quốc gia này, chắc chắn lời khuyên về sự cần trọng vẫn được đặt ra:

- Giữa cuộc du hành, tránh tiếp xúc trực tiếp với các loài vật có cảnh, bao gồm gà vịt và những loại chim hoang dã và đừng thăm viếng các trại chăn nuôi gà vịt hay chở bán chim là nơi nuôi giữ các loại chim chcóc còn sống. Rửa tay thường xuyên với xà bông và nước, hay rửa tay bằng loại dầu rửa tay đặc chế bằng chất cồn (alcohol-bases
hand gel) ở những nơi không sẵn nước và xà bông. Hãy chắc chắn rằng tất cả thực phẩm đến từ gà vịt, bao gồm trứng phải được nấu thật chín trước khi ăn.

- Sau khi trở về, theo dõi sức khỏe của mình trong 10 ngày. Nếu quý vị bị nóng sột cổ hay khó thở, liên lạc với bác sĩ của quý vị và cho bác sĩ biết chi tiết các triệu chứng, nơi nào quý vị đã đến du lịch và nếu quý vị có tiếp xúc trực tiếp với gà vịt hay với người bệnh.

- Các bác sĩ hành nghề trong Quân Cam chủ trì cho những bệnh nhân bị các triệu chứng duy trì hỗ trợ từng du lịch ở những vùng xảy ra các trường hợp bị bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1) trước đó 10 ngày để rồi có các triệu chứng thì cần lập tức liên lạc với văn phòng Y Tế Công Cộng (Public Health) ở số (714) 834-8180 để có được sự thụ thị nghiệm thích đáng.

Nhằm bảo vệ toàn bộ sức khỏe, khách du lịch cần thễm nhiều sự chuẩn thế khác như ngủ bữa mồi ăn, tránh ăn thực phẩm và uống nước bị nhiễm độc, và tránh tiếp xúc với sức vật. Hãy vào trang mạng điện tử dành cho người đi du lịch của Trung Tâm Kiểm Dịch (CDC) để biết thêm tin tức.

# # #
Influenza Activity Increasing in Orange County

(Santa Ana) – Reports from health care providers and laboratories indicate that influenza activity in Orange County is increasing, mirroring a trend being seen in the rest of California and nationwide.

“In addition to influenza, there are a number of other respiratory viruses circulating in the community,” said Eric G. Handler, M.D., M.P.H, Orange County Health Officer. “We can all help to reduce the spread of the flu and other illnesses by taking simple steps such as washing our hands frequently, covering our mouth and nose when we sneeze or cough, and staying home from work or school if we are sick. It is also not too late to get a flu shot this season.”

Flu shots are still available from the Orange County Health Care Agency for individuals at-risk of severe complications from influenza. These include adults 50 years of age and older, those with chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease, children from six through 59 months of age and pregnant women. Information about flu shots is available by calling the Health Care Agency’s Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448. Flu shots may also still be available at doctor’s offices and primary or urgent care clinics.

There have been reports of severe pediatric influenza cases in Orange County this flu season, including one possible influenza related pediatric death. While pediatric deaths from influenza do not occur frequently in Orange County, it is not unusual to have one or two each flu season. Severe flu symptoms include difficulty breathing, persistent fever, recurrence of fever and worsening of symptoms after an initial improvement, signs of dehydration, and change in alertness.

# # #
Hospital Emergency Rooms Feel the Impact of Seasonal Illnesses

(Santa Ana) – Hospital emergency rooms in Orange County are busy, due in part to influenza and other respiratory and viral illnesses that normally occur this time of year.

“Emergency rooms are reporting an increase in visits for seasonal illnesses, resulting in longer waits and, in some cases, an increase in the number of hospitals that temporary close their emergency rooms to new patients being transported by ambulance, a condition we call diversion,” said Samuel J. Stratton, M.D., M.P.H., Medical Director of Orange County Emergency Medical Services. “We need the public’s help in limiting emergency room visits to those that are medical emergencies, so that resources can be used to care for the most seriously ill patients.”

Most people recover from influenza and other viral illnesses without requiring medical attention. Typical care may include acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever, drinking enough liquids to prevent dehydration, eating light meals and getting adequate bed rest. If symptoms persist or worsen, individuals should contact their personal physician or regular health care provider. Indications of more serious illness that might need immediate medical care include difficulty breathing, severe vomiting, excessive drowsiness and higher fever, especially in young children, the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions. Signs of dehydration in children include being unable to take adequate amounts of fluids, crying without tears, and urinating less often than normal.

Limiting the spread of influenza and other viral illnesses is also important in keeping hospital emergency rooms open for emergencies. To help prevent the spread of viruses when you are feeling ill:

- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Wash your hands frequently and before possible close contact with others
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth and then touching others without washing your hands
- Don’t share eating utensils, drinking glasses or other personal items
- Stay home if you are sick or have symptoms of flu-like illness

# # #
Local Food Establishments Receive Awards of Excellence

(Santa Ana) – From a qualifying group of 9,642 food facilities throughout the County, the Health Care Agency’s Environmental Health Division has issued 2,241 Award of Excellence certificates to local Orange County food facilities this month. Environmental Health’s Food Protection Program recognizes these facilities for their outstanding food safety and sanitation practices during 2007. The certificate acknowledges the dedication of each recipient and highlights their diligent efforts in preventing health code violations.

Included in the Award of Excellence Program are food facilities such as restaurants, catering establishments, retail bakeries, supermarkets, supermarket/bakery combinations and public and private schools with food preparation services. A complete list of all recipients and award criteria is available online at www.ocfoodinfo.com/foodaward.htm.

The Food Protection Program created this annual Award of Excellence to provide an incentive for food establishments to consistently meet or exceed health and safety standards for food facility operations. Eligible food establishments throughout the County may receive this annual award each year that they exhibit excellent food safety and sanitation practices.

The Food Protection Program focuses on the inspection of retail food facilities in order to promote the safe and sanitary preparation and service of foods, prevent foodborne illness, and protect consumers from adulterated food products. For more information about the Health Care Agency’s Food Protection Program, call (714) 433-6000.

# # #
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 26, 2008

Contact: Ryan Drabek
(714) 935-6427

Orange County Animal Care Services Hosts
“Meet the Prison Pups” Event

(Santa Ana) - Orange County Animal Care Services (OCACS) will host its first “Meet the Prison Pups” event Saturday, March 1 from 10 am to 2 pm at the Animal Care Center, 561 The City Drive South, Orange.

Four special dogs were selected from OCACS in October of 2007 to participate in Canine Support Team’s Prison Pups Program at the Youth Correctional Facility in Chino, California. The dogs have been fully obedience trained, crate trained, and housebroken by a select group of inmates. In return, the dogs taught the inmates unconditional love, responsibility, and respect. All of the dogs are available for adoption and have been vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and microchipped.

“This is just the beginning of what appears to be a very successful program for OCACS in cooperation with the Canine Support Team,” said Jennifer Phillips, Director of Animal Care Services. “This event will not only showcase the Prison Pups, but also the many wonderful animals we have available for adoption at OCACS.”

Last year 11,501 dogs, cats, rabbits and other lovable animals were adopted from Orange County Animal Care Services. For further information on this event, contact Ryan Drabek at 714-935-6427.

# # #
Tuberculosis (TB) Cases in Orange County Continue to Decrease

(Santa Ana) – Tuberculosis (TB) cases in Orange County decreased 4% during 2007, with a total of 217 TB cases reported during the last calendar year.

“The number of TB cases reported in Orange County has decreased 27% in the last ten years, from 298 cases in 1998 to 217 cases last year,” said Dr. Eric Handler, Orange County Health Officer. “TB continues to be a significant public health concern, and we must continue addressing TB control as a public health priority to ensure that this trend continues.”

Orange County’s TB case rate remains just below the statewide rate and Orange County is fourth among California counties in the total number of new TB cases reported, behind Los Angeles, San Diego and Santa Clara Counties. A continuing concern is the thousands of Orange County residents who carry TB bacteria in their bodies but have not become ill, which is known as latent TB infection.

March 24th is observed each year as World TB Day. This year’s theme, I Am Stopping TB, recognizes the role of individuals in protecting themselves and their families from tuberculosis. In Orange County, the Health Care Agency’s Public Health Services investigates reports of active TB cases, provides treatment and control services for those with active TB and provides treatment of latent TB infection for individuals who are at increased risk of developing active TB disease.

# # #
For Immediate Release
March 28, 2008

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Bat Found At Apartment Complex in Anaheim
Tests Positive for Rabies

(Santa Ana) - Anyone who may have come into contact with a bat found Saturday, March 22 at the Canyon Village Apartments, 1265 N. Chrisden St., Anaheim, is asked to call the Orange County Health Care Agency, following tests that showed the bat was infected with rabies.

“Initial reports are that some children may have been in the vicinity of the bat before it was picked up by OC Animal Care,” said Dr. Hildy Meyers, Public Health Epidemiology Medical Director. “In addition, it is possible that a cat may have been in the same area prior to the removal of the bat. We want to exercise the utmost in caution by asking the parents of children who live at the apartment complex or may have been visiting there on March 22 to ask their children if they saw or had contact with a bat.” Anyone with additional information about the bat found March 22 at the Canyon Village Apartments should call Orange County Public Health Epidemiology at (714) 834-8180 during regular business hours (after-hours or weekends, please call (714) 834-7792).

Human rabies cases are very rare but can result if a person is bitten by a rabid animal or has contact with the animal’s saliva through a break in the skin. Medical assistance should be obtained as soon as possible after an exposure so any wound can be cleaned and preventive treatment called post-exposure prophylaxis can be started. This treatment is safe and effective. Most bats do not have rabies, but to minimize the risk, it is best never to handle any bat or wild animal.
Other recommendations to prevent rabies include:

- Immediately wash all animal bites with soap and water, being sure to flush the wound well, then contact your doctor
- Avoid all contact with wild animals
- Do not sleep with open unscreened windows or doors
- If bats are seen inside a house or other structure, close off the area and contact animal control.

Once the bat(s) have been removed, close off any areas allowing entrance into the house.

- Do not leave pet food outside where it will attract wild animals
- Vaccinate all cats and dogs against rabies
- Report all animal exposures to your Animal Control program
- Report stray animals to your Animal Control program
- Obey leash laws


###
Plan for Mental Health Services Act Workforce Education and Training Funding Available for Public Review and Comment

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency’s draft plan to seek $8.2 million in Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Workforce Education and Training funding is now available for public review and comment during a thirty-day period ending May 2, 2008.

The MHSA Workforce Education and Training Plan includes nineteen separate programs/projects aimed at increasing the diversity of the public mental health workforce in Orange County. The plan is also designed to increase the number of culturally competent licensed, non-licensed and paraprofessional staff available to provide mental health services that are wellness, recovery, and resilience-focused, and client/family member-driven.

The Plan was developed through an extensive community stakeholder process guided by an advisory group. Input was collected from approximately thirty focus groups composed of a wide variety of stakeholders, including educational institutions, law enforcement, service providers for each age group, underserved ethnic/linguistic minority populations, and special communities, such as the deaf and hard of hearing.

A copy of the Plan and a Comment Form is posted on the MHSA website at www.ochealthinfo.com/mhsa. Copies are also available from the Health Care Agency MHSA Training Office, 600 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Suite 510, Santa Ana 92701. Orange County’s Mental Health Board will hold a Public Hearing on the plan Thursday, May 8 beginning at 9 a.m. at the Orange County Hall of Administration, 333 W. Santa Ana Boulevard, Santa Ana

# # #
YOUTH-CREATED “TOBACCO AND HOLLYWOOD” AD UNVEILED

(Santa Ana) – To help youth make informed decisions and to counter the influence that smoking in movies has on youth, the County of Orange Health Care Agency’s Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) is joining with community leaders, educators and students in the City of La Habra for a May 6th special event to unveil a youth-created “Tobacco and Hollywood” poster.

The unveiling of the artwork by Diane Negrete and Rocio Martinez, students and young artists from Sonora High School, will be held May 6 at 1:30 p.m. at a bus shelter on the corner of La Habra Blvd. and Palm St. Diane and Rocio’s cartoon was chosen from more than 100 entries as one of the best cartoons educating the public about the impact that smoking in movies has on youth. The “Tobacco and Hollywood” project offers youth ages 11-17 the opportunity to make a positive impact in the community through the development of their artwork.

Smoking in movies has been shown in research studies to increase the likelihood that youth will start smoking. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has repeatedly cited exposure to tobacco use in media as a major factor in youth smoking. Youth who see smoking on television and other media are more likely to start smoking than youth who are not exposed to smoking in media. Each year an estimated 390,000 teens start smoking because of exposure to smoking in movies and 120,000 will die prematurely as a result, according to a national study published in the journal Pediatrics.

The mission of the Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) is to reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke in Orange County by collaborating with community organizations, public agencies and committed individuals. TUPP offers youth and adults tobacco education as well as free smoking cessation and prevention programs. Information about cessation services for adults and teens is available by calling 1-866-NEW-LUNG or 866-639-5864. More information about TUPP can be found on the Internet at www.ochealthinfo.com/tupp or by calling (714) 541-1444.

###
For Immediate Release  
May 5, 2008

Contact: Barbara Brashear  
(714) 834-3232

YOUTH-CREATED “TOBACCO AND HOLLYWOOD” AD UNVEILED

(Santa Ana) – To help youth make informed decisions and to counter the influence that smoking in movies has on youth, the County of Orange Health Care Agency’s Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) is joining with community leaders, educators and students in the City of La Habra for a May 6th special event to unveil a youth-created “Tobacco and Hollywood” poster.

The unveiling of the artwork by Kristen Lee, a student and young artist from Sonora High School, will be held May 6 at 10:30 a.m. at a bus shelter on the corner of Harbor Blvd. and Lambert Rd. Kristen’s cartoon was chosen from more than 100 entries as one of the best cartoons educating the public about the impact that smoking in movies has on youth. The “Tobacco and Hollywood” project offers youth ages 11-17 the opportunity to make a positive impact in the community through the development of their artwork.

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###
For Immediate Release
May 5, 2008
Contact: Barbara Brashear
(714) 834-3232

YOUTH-CREATED “TOBACCO AND HOLLYWOOD” AD UNVEILED

(Santa Ana) – To help youth make informed decisions and to counter the influence that smoking in movies has on youth, the County of Orange Health Care Agency’s Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) is joining with community leaders, educators and students in the City of Buena Park for a May 8th special event to unveil a youth-created “Tobacco and Hollywood” poster.

The unveiling of the artwork by Faith Dela Cruz, a student and young artist from Buena Park High School, will be held May 8 at 10:30 a.m. at a bus shelter on the corner of Knott Ave. and Orangethorpe Ave. Faith’s cartoon was chosen from more than 100 entries as one of the best cartoons educating the public about the impact that smoking in movies has on youth. The “Tobacco and Hollywood” project offers youth ages 11-17 the opportunity to make a positive impact in the community through the development of their artwork.

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###
For Immediate Release
May 7, 2008

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Report Details Mental Health Services Act Implementation Progress

(Santa Ana) – Progress made during 2007 in the implementation of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Community Services and Supports Plan in Orange County is detailed in a report now available for public review and comment.

The MHSA Community Services and Supports Implementation Progress Report provides information on both the accomplishments and challenges encountered by the Orange County Health Care Agency in the implementation process. Orange County has been successful in implementing almost all of the programs as originally planned. In a few instances, implementation has been delayed by challenges associated with the contracting process and with locating or developing appropriate service sites.

The progress report will be discussed May 28 during a Public Hearing conducted by the County Mental Health Board at the Hall of Administration, with public comment being accepted through May 25. A copy of the progress report and the comment form are available on the MHSA website at www.ochealthinfo.com/mhsa. Copies are also available at the Health Care Agency Mental Health Services Act Office located at 600 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Suite 510, Santa Ana, CA 92701.

The County of Orange received approximately $36 million in MHSA funding during fiscal year 2007-08 for the twenty programs approved as part of the Community Services and Supports Plan. Under the Mental Health Services Act, funding is provided to California counties to support programs that reduce the long-term adverse impact of untreated serious mental illness by expanding use of successful, innovative, and evidence-based practices at the local level. The Mental Health Services Act includes several components, including Community Services and Supports, Workforce Education and Training, Prevention and Early Intervention, Capital Facilities and Technology, Housing, and Innovative Programs.

For more information or to obtain a copy of the Community Services and Supports Implementation Progress Report, please contact the MHSA Office at (714) 667-5620.

# # #
For Immediate Release
Thursday, May 15

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Early Season Hot Spell Brings Risk of Heat-Related Illnesses

(Santa Ana) – The National Weather Service is predicting near record high temperatures for some areas of Orange County over the next several days and area residents are urged to take precautions to prevent heat related illnesses.

“The current forecast calls for hotter than average high temperatures extending through the weekend,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “Everyone should take precautions to stay cool and drink plenty of water and other non-alcoholic fluids to prevent serious heat related illnesses. Additional precautions are especially needed for older adults, those with preexisting medical conditions like heart or lung disease, those with disabilities, children, and those who may be working outdoors. Remember that your pets need extra water and shade, too.”

Prolonged exposure to excessive temperatures may cause serious conditions like heat exhaustion or heat stroke and can even be fatal. Symptoms of heat exhaustion may include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, weakness, headache, nausea or vomiting and dizziness. Warning signs of heat stroke may include an extremely high body temperature, unconsciousness, confusion, hot and dry skin (no sweating), a rapid, strong pulse, and a throbbing headache. If symptoms of heat stroke occur, immediately call for medical assistance. Move the person to a shady area and begin cooling their body with water.

Recommended precautions to prevent heat related illnesses include:

- **Staying cool indoors.** Use your air conditioner to cool your home. If you don’t have air conditioning, visit public facilities such as shopping malls, community centers or libraries to stay cool. Do not rely on electric fans as your primary cooling device during a heat wave. When the temperature is in the high 90’s or higher, a fan will not prevent heat-related illness. A cool shower or bath is a more effective way to cool off.

- **Drinking more fluids, especially water.** Don’t wait until you are thirsty.

- **Checking often on those at high-risk.** This includes older adults, those with chronic medical conditions, people with disabilities, those who take certain medications and children. Make sure their air conditioner is turned on, or offer to take them to a cooler place.
If you have to be outside in the heat, follow these recommendations:

- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing and a hat to provide shade from the sun. Use sunscreen.
- Avoid over-exertion and schedule outdoor activities for the cooler part of the day. Spend as much time as possible in the shade.
- Never leave a person or pet unattended in a closed car or other vehicle.

For more information on heat related illnesses, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).
Mussel Quarantine

(Santa Ana) – The County of Orange Health Care Agency reminds shellfish consumers that the Annual Mussel Quarantine in California took effect on May 1st and will continue through October 31st, 2008. Sport harvesting of mussels for human consumption is prohibited along the entire California coastline. All bays and inlets are included in the quarantine. The purpose of this quarantine is to protect the public from deadly poisons that may be present in bivalve mollusks, such as mussels, clams, oysters and scallops. Between 1927 and 2005, California recorded 521 cases of Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning, including 32 deaths.

The greatest hazard is poisoning from mussels because they develop high levels of toxin more quickly than other mollusks and are eaten whole without removal of digestive organs. All dark parts should be removed from clams, oysters and scallops before eating, since the poison may be concentrated in those areas. Health officials emphasize that toxic mussels cannot be distinguished from harmless ones. Moreover, cooking does not destroy the toxins, as they are relatively heat resistant.

The California quarantine applies only to mussels collected locally by sports harvesters. All commercial shellfish harvesters in California must be certified by the State and are subject to strict testing requirements.

The safest guideline to follow is: Do not eat mussels from California coastal waters collected by sports harvesters until after October 31.
For Immediate Release
May 29, 2008

YOUTH-CREATED “TOBACCO AND HOLLYWOOD” AD UNVEILED

(Santa Ana) – To help youth make informed decisions and to counter the influence that smoking in movies has on youth, the County of Orange Health Care Agency’s Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) is joining with community leaders, educators and students in the City of Santa Ana for a June 3rd special event to unveil a youth-created “Tobacco and Hollywood” poster.

The unveiling of the artwork by Kayla Enos, a student and young artist from Orange County High School for the Arts, will be held June 3 at 2:30 p.m. at a bus shelter on the corner of Main St. and Edinger Ave. Kayla’s cartoon was chosen from more than 100 entries as one of the best cartoons educating the public about the impact that smoking in movies has on youth. The “Tobacco and Hollywood” project offers youth ages 11-17 the opportunity to make a positive impact in the community through the development of their artwork.

Smoking in movies has been shown in research studies to increase the likelihood that youth will start smoking. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has repeatedly cited exposure to tobacco use in media as a major factor in youth smoking. Youth who see smoking on television and other media are more likely to start smoking than youth who are not exposed to smoking in media. Each year an estimated 390,000 teens start smoking because of exposure to smoking in movies and 120,000 will die prematurely as a result, according to a national study published in the journal Pediatrics.

The mission of the Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) is to reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke in Orange County by collaborating with community organizations, public agencies and committed individuals. TUPP offers youth and adults tobacco education, free smoking cessation and prevention programs. Information about cessation services for adults and teens is available by calling 1-866-NEW-LUNG or 866-639-5864. More information about TUPP can be found on the Internet at www.ochealthinfo.com/tupp or by calling (714) 541-1444.

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The unveiling of the artwork by Lilia Vega, a student and young artist from Orange County High School for the Arts, will be held June 3 at 1:30 p.m. at a bus shelter on the corner of McFadden Ave. and Main St. Lilia’s cartoon was chosen from more than 100 entries as one of the best cartoons educating the public about the impact that smoking in movies has on youth. The “Tobacco and Hollywood” project offers youth ages 11-17 the opportunity to make a positive impact in the community through the development of their artwork.

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YOUTH-CREATED “TOBACCO AND HOLLYWOOD” AD UNVEILED

(Santa Ana) – To help youth make informed decisions and to counter the influence that smoking in movies has on youth, the County of Orange Health Care Agency’s Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) is joining with community leaders, educators and students in the City of Huntington Beach for a June 4th special event to unveil a youth-created “Tobacco and Hollywood” poster.

The unveiling of the artwork by Melissa Markowitz, a student and young artist from Huntington Beach High School, will be held June 4 at 10:30 a.m. at a bus shelter on the corner of 17th St. and Main St right by the Huntington Beach High School. Melissa’s cartoon was chosen from more than 100 entries as one of the best cartoons educating the public about the impact that smoking in movies has on youth. The “Tobacco and Hollywood” project offers youth ages 11-17 the opportunity to make a positive impact in the community through the development of their artwork.

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Para publicación inmediata
El 29 de mayo de 2008

Publicación de un anuncio creado por la juventud sobre el tema de “Tabaco y Hollywood”

(Santa Ana) – Para ayudar a la juventud hacer decisiones informadas y para contradecir la influencia que fumando en las películas de Hollywood tiene en la juventud, la Agencia del Cuidado de Salud del Condado de Orange/Programa de Prevención del Consumo de Tabaco (TUPP) se juntará con líderes de la comunidad, educadores, y estudiantes en la ciudad de Santa Ana el 3 de junio para celebrar la publicación de un anuncio creado por la juventud sobre el tema de “Tabaco y Hollywood”.

La revelación de la ilustración de Kayla Enos, estudiante y artista joven de Orange County High School for the Arts, será celebrado el 3 de junio a las 2:30 p.m. en una parada de autobús en la esquina de la calles Main y Edinger. El anuncio creado por Kayla fue elegido de más de 100 trabajos artísticos como uno de los mejores que educan al público acerca del impacto que fumando en las películas tiene en los jóvenes. El proyecto de “Tabaco y Hollywood” ofrece a la juventud entre 11 y 17 años de edad la oportunidad de tener un impacto positivo en la comunidad por el desarrollo de sus trabajos de arte.

Fumando en las películas ha demostrado en estudios de aumentar la probabilidad que la juventud iniciará el fumar. Los Centros para el Control de la Enfermedad y la Prevención (CDC) han citado en varias ocasiones la exposición al uso del tabaco en los medios de comunicación como un factor en el fumar de la juventud. La juventud que ve fumando en la televisión y otros medios de comunicación son más probables de empezar a fumar que la juventud que no está expuesta al fumar en los medios de comunicación. Es estimado que cada año 390.000 jóvenes empiezan a fumar a causa de la exposición al fumar en las películas y 120.000 morirán prematuramente como resultado, según un estudio nacional de la revista Pediatría.

La misión del Programa de Prevención del Consumo de Tabaco (TUPP) es reducir el uso del tabaco y la exposición al humo de segunda mano en el Condado de Orange con la colaboración de organizaciones en la comunidad, agencias públicas e individuos entregados a esta causa. TUPP le ofrece a la juventud y a los adultos programas educativos sobre la prevención del tabaco y cómo dejar de fumar. TUPP también ofrece servicios gratuitos para adultos y jóvenes para dejar de fumar, que son disponibles llamando al 1-866-NEW-LUNG o 1-866-639-5864. Puede encontrar más información sobre TUPP en el sitio web: http://ochealthinfo.com/tupp/home.htm o llamando al número telefónico principal, (714) 541-1444.
Para publicación inmediata     Ponerse en contacto con: Barbara Brashear
El 29 de mayo de 2008                                (714) 834-3232

Publicación de un anuncio creado por la juventud sobre el tema de “Tabaco y Hollywood”

(Santa Ana) – Para ayudar a la juventud a tomar decisiones informadas y para contradecir la influencia que fumando en las películas de Hollywood tiene en la juventud, la Agencia del Cuidado de Salud del Condado de Orange/Programa de Prevención del Consumo de Tabaco (TUPP) se juntará con líderes de la comunidad, educadores, y estudiantes en la ciudad de Santa Ana el 3 de junio para celebrar la publicación de un anuncio creado por la juventud sobre el tema de “Tabaco y Hollywood”.

La revelación de la ilustración de Lilia Vega, estudiante y artista joven de Orange County High School for the Arts, será celebrado el 3 de junio a la 1:30 p.m. en una parada de autobús en la esquina de la calles McFadden y Main. El anuncio creado por Lilia fue elegido de más de 100 trabajos artísticos como uno de los mejores que educan al público acerca del impacto que fumando en las películas tiene en los jóvenes. El proyecto de “Tabaco y Hollywood” ofrece a la juventud entre 11 y 17 años de edad la oportunidad de tener un impacto positivo en la comunidad por el desarrollo de sus trabajos de arte.

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La revelación de la ilustración de Melissa Markowitz, estudiante y artista joven de Huntington Beach High School, será celebrado el 4 de junio a las 10:30 a.m. en una parada de autobús en la esquina de la calle 17 y la calle Main, a un lado de Huntington Beach High School. El anuncio creado por Melissa fue elegido de más de 100 trabajos artísticos como uno de los mejores que educan al público acerca del impacto que fumando en las películas tiene en los jóvenes. El proyecto de “Tabaco y Hollywood” ofrece a la juventud entre 11 y 17 años de edad la oportunidad de tener un impacto positivo en la comunidad por el desarrollo de sus trabajos de arte.

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For Immediate Release
June 3, 2008

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Mental Health Prevention and Early Intervention Programs
Subject of Focus Groups

(Santa Ana) – Public input that will help shape programs and services offering early assistance to those with a mental health problem will be sought at a series of “Speak Up” focus group forums in Orange County during the month of June.

The focus group sessions will be held in four Orange County locations:
- Saturday, June 7, 1-3 p.m., Stanton Community Center, 11822 Santa Paula Dr., Stanton 90680
- Saturday, June 14, 9 a.m-12 p.m., Office of State Senator Lou Correa, 2323 N. Broadway, Santa Ana 92706
- Saturday, June 21, 9 a.m.-11 a.m., Western Youth Services, 23461 South Pointe Drive, Laguna Hills 92653
- Sunday, June 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Downtown Community Center, 250 East Center Street, Anaheim 92805

At the meetings, community members will be asked to share their ideas about what is needed in their communities to prevent and to intervene early in mental illness. The sessions mark the launch of the Prevention and Early Intervention component of the Mental Health Services Act. The Prevention and Early Intervention component is intended to reduce the risk factors, or stressors, that may lead to the initial onset of a mental health problem, as well as promote and support the well-being of at-risk individuals under challenging life circumstances in order to reduce the suffering caused by mental health problems.

For more information about the sessions, please contact Alan Albright of the Orange County Health Care Agency at (714) 834-5572. If you are attending and need translation services, please contact Hanh Truong (Vietnamese) at (714) 796-0190, Sergio Ventura (Spanish) at (714) 796-0191 or Kevin Dewindt (ASL) at (714) 448-2764 (videophone) or (714) 517-6148 (TTY).

# # #
For Immediate Release
June 16, 2008

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Mental Health Services Act Capital Facilities and Technology Plan
Available for Public Review and Comment

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency’s draft plan to seek $28.3 million in Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Capital Facilities and Technological Needs Plan funding is available for public review and comment through July 6, 2008.

Of the total amount of funding available, 80% will be spent on Capital Facilities and 20% will be used to fund Technological Needs. A portion of the Capital Facilities funding will be used to construct a site for programs including a Wellness/Peer Support Center, a Crisis Residential Program, and a Vocational Training Program.

A copy of the Plan and a comment form are posted on the MHSA website at www.ochealthinfo.com/mhsa. Copies are also available from the Health Care Agency Behavioral Health Services Education and Training Office, 600 W. Santa Ana Blvd., Suite 510, Santa Ana. Orange County’s Mental Health Board will hold a Public Hearing on the plan Thursday, July 10 beginning at 9 a.m. at the Orange County Hall of Administration, 333 W. Santa Ana Boulevard, Santa Ana, 92701.

# # #
July 4th Picnic Plans? – Bring the Insect Repellent!

(Santa Ana) – The timing of the Independence Day holiday means a long weekend for many people, with an opportunity to enjoy family gatherings, picnics in the park and fireworks displays. But the arrival of Summer also means the start of West Nile Virus season, so it is important to protect yourself and your family from West Nile Virus (WNV) infection.

“Everyone should take a few simple steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites and reduce their risk of WNV infection.” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. While there have not been any confirmed human WNV cases in Orange County so far this year, WNV has been found in numerous dead birds and mosquito pools.

Ways you can reduce your risk of WNV infection include:

- Using an insect repellent containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, or IR 3535, always following label directions
- Draining standing water around your home or property to eliminate places where mosquitoes can breed
- Making sure you have bug proof screens on your doors and windows
- Reducing outdoor activities at dusk and dawn, when many mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants to prevent mosquito bites

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus will experience symptoms which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

More information about West Nile Virus can be found on the Internet at:

- [www.ochealthinfo.com](http://www.ochealthinfo.com) (Orange County Health Care Agency)
- [www.ocved.org](http://www.ocved.org) (Orange County Vector Control District)
- [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov) (State of California West Nile Virus site) and
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

# # #
On-line Restaurant Inspection Information Enhanced

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency has enhanced the information about restaurant inspections available on the www.ocfoodinfo.com website, now offering access to an electronic version of the actual inspection report.

The inspection report, available in portable document format (PDF), will allow the public to view specific information about any Health and Safety Code violations noted during the restaurant’s most recent inspection. Previously, on-line information was limited to general information about the category of violation. “We believe this enhancement will greatly benefit the public by providing easy access to actual inspection results for their favorite restaurants as well as other restaurants they may be planning to visit,” said David Souleles, Deputy Agency Director for Public Health Services.

Initially, reports will be available for inspections conducted since January 1, 2008. The downloadable inspection reports will be kept on the website for approximately two years, providing restaurant patrons with a historical record of the facility’s compliance with the Health and Safety Code’s standards.

Orange County Environmental Health, a division of the Health Care Agency’s Public Health Services, conducts regular inspections at a variety of food facilities, including restaurants, grocery stores and wholesale establishments that manufacture or distribute food products. Environmental Health also works closely with other Public Health staff to investigate reports of foodborne illness in the community. The goal of the Food Protection Program is to ensure that the food sold and served in Orange County is safe, wholesome, properly labeled and advertised, and produced under sanitary conditions.

# # #
For Immediate Release
July 17, 2008

Contact: Deanne Thompson
(714) 834-2178

Orange County Confirms First Human West Nile Virus Infections of 2008

(Santa Ana) – Two Central Orange County residents have tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) infection, becoming the County’s first confirmed human WNV infections in 2008.

The infections were identified through routine screening tests performed when the men, who are 41 and 23 years old, recently donated blood. Donated blood is routinely screened for WNV infection to ensure the safety of the blood supply. The men did not develop symptoms of WNV disease and are considered to be asymptomatic blood donor infections.

“This year’s first human infections in Orange County serve as an important reminder that West Nile Virus is here to stay and that we all must take steps to prevent mosquito bites,” says Dr. Eric G. Handler, County Health Officer. Last year, 1 asymptomatic blood donor and 9 confirmed symptomatic cases of West Nile Virus infection were reported in Orange County while statewide, 380 human WNV infections were reported with 21 WNV-related deaths.

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, or products containing IR3535, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus may experience symptoms which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes

-More-
swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocved.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

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West Nile Virus Cases Confirmed in Orange County

(Santa Ana) – Testing has confirmed the first two symptomatic West Nile Virus (WNV) cases in Orange County for 2008, bringing the total number of reported WNV human infections this year to four.

The confirmed symptomatic cases are:

- An 80-year-old Anaheim man who became ill in early July with symptoms of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease and remains hospitalized, and
- A 49-year-old central Orange County woman who became ill in late June with symptoms of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease and remains hospitalized. This infection may have been acquired during travel outside Orange County.

Previously reported were two asymptomatic blood donor WNV infections detected in Orange County.

“West Nile Virus season is underway, and we are very concerned about the potential impact on people’s health,” said Dr. Eric G. Handler, County Health Officer. “Because we can expect to see additional WNV cases from now into late September or October, Orange County residents should be taking precautions to prevent mosquito bites.”

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, or products containing IR3535, always following label directions
- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus will experience symptoms that may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops the more serious symptoms of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, such as high fever, severe
headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

# # #
County Offers New Home-Generated Sharps Disposal Options
Beginning September 1, 2008

New sharps ban at landfills means residents must find new alternatives to putting sharps into trash or recycling cans

Orange County residents have several options available to comply with a new state law taking effect September 1, 2008 that prohibits the disposal of medical sharps waste in household trash.

The change in the California Health and Safety Code makes it illegal to dispose of home-generated sharps waste in household trash or recycling containers, and requires that all sharps waste be transported to a collection center in an approved sharps container. The code also defines "home-generated sharps waste" as hypodermic needles, pen needles, intravenous needles, lancets, and other devices that are used to penetrate the skin for the delivery of medications derived from a household, including a multifamily residence or household.

“There are three primary options for disposing of home generated sharps waste beginning September 1,” said Richard Sanchez, Director of Environmental Health for the Orange County Health Care Agency. “Several cities have programs in place to help residents dispose of sharps waste. There are also sharps disposal programs available through some pharmacies and private companies that offer mail-in service. In addition, OC Waste and Recycling will begin accepting home generated sharps waste for free disposal at the County’s Household Hazardous Waste Collection Centers beginning September 2nd.”

Household sharps users who already use an approved disposal option other than putting the sharps into the trash do not need to make any changes to comply with the law. Information about city-sponsored programs can be found on city websites or through a resource list available on the Health Care Agency website at http://ochealthinfo.com/regulatory/medwaste_home.htm. The County’s Household Hazardous Waste Collection Centers accept free disposal of sharps waste beginning September 1, 2008.”
Waste Collection Centers are open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (closed major holidays and rainy days). The centers are located at:

Anaheim
1071 N. Blue Gum Street
Anaheim, CA  92806

Huntington Beach
17121 Nichols Street
Huntington Beach, CA  92647

Irvine
6411 Oak Canyon
Irvine, CA  92618

San Juan Capistrano
32250 La Pata Avenue
San Juan Capistrano, CA  92675


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California’s First West Nile Virus Death Reported in Orange County

(Santa Ana) – A 72 year old Orange County woman is the first person in California to die of West Nile virus (WNV) infection this year.

The Buena Park resident died in August after being hospitalized. Testing by the California Department of Public Health has confirmed the woman had WNV infection. While people over 50 years of age are at increased risk of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, the more serious form of West Nile Virus infection, there have been several cases reported this year in individuals under age 50, including one juvenile.

County health officials urge area residents to take precautions against mosquito bites. “West Nile virus activity is very high in Southern California this year and this unfortunate death shows how serious West Nile virus infection can be,” said Dr. Eric G. Handler, County Health Officer. “It is very important that people take the necessary steps to prevent mosquito bites and minimize their risk of West Nile virus infection.”

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, or products containing IR3535, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

This is the first WNV-related fatality in Orange County since 2004, the first year that human cases were reported in the County. Statewide, 112 human cases of West Nile virus
infection have been reported in 2008, including 97 symptomatic cases. The statewide number includes 26 symptomatic cases and 4 positive blood donors from Orange County.

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus experience symptoms which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

# # #
Health Care Agency Reports Second West Nile Virus Related Death in Orange County

(Santa Ana) – Testing by the Health Care Agency has confirmed the second West Nile Virus (WNV) related death of an Orange County resident this year.

The victim was a 64 year old male resident of Garden Grove who died in August after being hospitalized. As of August 28, the total number of confirmed symptomatic cases of WNV infection in Orange County is 32, and 4 blood donors have tested positive for the virus. This is the highest number of WNV infections in the County since 2004, the first year that human cases were reported, when there were 62 symptomatic cases and 2 positive blood donors for the full year. Four WNV related deaths were reported in Orange County in 2004.

County Health officials say there may be several reasons for this increase in WNV activity, including environmental factors affecting the virus and human behavior. “We are very concerned about the level of West Nile virus activity in Orange County. Adding to our concern is the number of people who will celebrate the Labor Day holiday weekend by spending time outdoors, where they may be exposed to mosquitoes”, said Dr. Eric G. Handler, County Health Officer. “With the holiday weekend approaching and children heading back to school and participating in outdoor sports, it is important to remember that by taking personal precautions, each of us can make a difference in the fight against West Nile virus. The public must take an active role in protecting themselves and their families from mosquito bites.”

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, or products containing IR3535, always following label directions
- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors

While people over 50 years of age are at increased risk of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, the more serious form of West Nile Virus infection, there have been several cases reported this year in individuals under age 50.

Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus experience symptoms which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops more serious symptoms such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

# # #
For Immediate Release
September 4, 2008

State Report Ranks Orange County on Health Indicators

(Santa Ana) - The 2008 County Health Status Profiles report from the California Department of Public Health and the California Conference of Local Health Officers shows Orange County has already met several of the national Healthy People 2010 objectives.

The report, using data for the period of 2004-2006, shows that the Orange County death rate is lower than the Healthy People 2010 objective for:

- Deaths due to all cancers (per 100,000 population, age adjusted)
- Deaths due to lung cancer (per 100,000 population, age adjusted)
- Deaths due to female breast cancer (per 100,000 population, age adjusted)
- Deaths due to prostate cancer (per 100,000 population, age adjusted)
- Deaths due to coronary heart disease (per 100,000 population, age adjusted), and
- Deaths due to cerebrovascular disease (per 100,000 population, age adjusted)

“While these are important achievements, there is still room for improvement. Orange County’s death rate due to Alzheimer’s disease, as well as deaths attributed to influenza/pneumonia, exceeded the statewide average for the three year period,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer and Deputy Agency Director for Public Health Services. “Working with community health care providers, the Health Care Agency will continue its efforts to encourage Orange County residents to lead healthier lifestyles.”

The County Health Status Profiles report can be downloaded from the California Department of Public Health website at www.cdph.ca.gov/pubsforms/Pubs/OHIRProfiles2008.pdf. Healthy People 2010 is a comprehensive set of disease prevention and health promotion objectives for America. The national health objectives were designed to identify the most significant preventable threats to our health and to establish national goals to reduce those threats. More information is available at www.healthypeople.gov.

# # #
Orange County Joins Unique National Effort to Prevent Substance Abuse Among Children and Teens

(September 22, 2008) - The Prevention Coalitions of Orange County (PCOC) and the Orange County Health Care Agency are joining in the eighth annual celebration of Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children™ on September 22 as part of the continuing effort to prevent substance abuse among children and teens.

Launched in 2001, Family Day is a movement that encourages parents to frequently eat dinner with their kids and be involved in their children’s lives. Research conducted by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University consistently shows that the more often children eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs.

“We hope that families will embrace Family Day and will continue having regular family dinners throughout the year,” said Dr. Eric G. Handler, County Health Officer. “The conversations we have with our children over the dinner table open lines of communication that truly can make a difference in their lives and help them make healthier choices along the way.” According to the CASA report entitled The Importance of Family Dinners III, compared to kids who have fewer than three family dinners per week, children and teens who have frequent family dinners (five or more per week) are at 70 percent lower risk for substance abuse, are half as likely to try cigarettes or marijuana, and are one third less likely to try alcohol. The report also found that teens that have frequent family dinners are more likely to get better grades in school.

The Prevention Coalitions of Orange County (PCOC) consists of several local organizations and agencies that share in the mission to strengthen Orange County’s capacity to provide coordinated alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention services and resources that promote safe neighborhoods and healthy lifestyles. PCOC believes that celebrating Family Day is an important first step in helping to achieve a substance abuse free life for American’s children and teens.

For information on local Family Day activities, contact Pauline Stauder, program supervisor for the Orange County Health Care Agency Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT), at (714) 834-2094, or for more information on the national observance of Family Day, visit www.CASAFamilyDay.org.

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Seasonal Flu Shot Clinics Begin in Orange County

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) has scheduled flu shot clinics beginning the week of October 27 at various locations throughout the area to protect residents from seasonal influenza (flu). HCA encourages those in high-risk groups and anyone wishing to decrease their risk of influenza to receive a flu shot. The first laboratory-confirmed case of influenza this season was reported to the County earlier this month through a network of physicians who provide information about influenza activity in the community. Sporadic influenza activity has been reported throughout the state.

“Receiving a flu shot is an effective measure in preventing influenza,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “This is an ideal time to become vaccinated against the flu since the season is just beginning. Influenza can cause serious illness – every year on average 226,000 people are hospitalized and more than 35,000 people die in the United States due to influenza and its complications.

Information about locations, dates and times for the County’s flu shot program is available by calling the HCA Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 or by visiting the Health Care Agency’s website at www.ochealthinfo.com/public/flu. HCA’s seasonal flu shot program provides free flu shots to eligible individuals including:

- People 50 years of age or older
- People with chronic disease like heart disease, asthma or other lung disease
- Children aged six months through 59 months (less than 5 years of age)
- Children or adolescents receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- Women who are pregnant or will be pregnant during flu season
- People with health conditions that suppress their immune or respiratory system
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
- Health care workers
- Anyone living with or caring for children under 5 years or adults over 50 years of age
- Anyone living with or caring for people with medical conditions that place them at higher risk of complications from influenza
Those not eligible for the county program can obtain a flu shot from community clinics, physician offices, urgent care centers and other private health care providers in the community. Visit the American Lung Association website at www.flucliniclocator.org for assistance in finding a flu shot.

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Get a Free Flu Shot on November 7th

(Santa Ana) – Free flu shots for adults and children will be offered November 7th at two Orange County locations as part of a continuing series of emergency exercises testing the county’s ability to hold several mass vaccination clinics at the same time.

The free flu shots will be offered November 7th from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at:

- Magnolia Baptist Church, 720 S. Magnolia Avenue, Anaheim 92804 (Drive through access; enter site heading north on Magnolia Avenue)
- Irvine Valley College, 5500 Irvine Center Drive, Irvine 92618 (Clinic access via Jeffrey and Irvine Valley)

Flu shots will be provided at no cost to adults and children three years of age and older. The Magnolia Baptist Church site will primarily offer drive-through flu shots with walk-up flu shots also available, while the Irvine Valley College site will offer both walk-up and drive-through flu shots. To receive a flu shot, participants should be feeling well on the day of the flu shot exercise and must complete a brief health screening to ensure they can safely receive a flu shot.

“Last year’s flu shot exercise was a tremendous success and we hope to give more than 3,000 free flu shots during this year’s event,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “Not only will people receive a free flu shot, they will also be helping the County and our community partners improve our capabilities to respond in the event of a public health emergency.”

Among the organizations helping to stage the vaccination clinics are the cities of Anaheim and Irvine; Magnolia Baptist Church and Irvine Valley College; the Orange County Health Care Agency; Anaheim Fire and Police Departments; Irvine Police Department; the Orange County Fire Authority; and the American Red Cross-Orange County Chapter.

An annual flu shot is the best way to prevent influenza. Some groups, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions, are at higher risk for serious flu complications.

# # #
Orange County Nurse-Family Partnership Celebrates 10th Anniversary

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Nurse-Family Partnership will mark its 10th anniversary November 10th with a celebratory event attended by program participants and their children, and local and national program representatives.

Nurse-Family Partnership is a home visitation program that provides support, education and counseling on health, parenting and self-sufficiency issues to low income, first time teen mothers. Program participants have demonstrated improved maternal and child health. For example in Orange County, the rate of premature births for Nurse-Family Partnership clients is 5.6%, lower than all other Nurse-Family Partnership sites in California, and lower than the overall state average of 10.7%. Mothers involved in the program initiate breastfeeding at a rate of 88%, higher than the countywide breastfeeding initiation rate of 85%, and 100% of the infants participating in the program are fully immunized at age 24 months. There are currently 155 families in the Nurse-Family Partnership program in Orange County; the program has assisted more than 823 Orange County families since its inception in 1998.

The anniversary event begins at 9:30 am on November 10th at the Neighborhood Community Center, 1845 Park Avenue, Costa Mesa.

“Statistics have shown that women who participate in this program are more likely to finish their education and move into gainful employment, and are less likely to abuse or neglect their children,” says Debbie Chitty, Division Manager, Public Health Nursing, for the Orange County Health Care Agency. Nurse-Family Partnership programs serve more than 15,000 families in 25 states. For more information about Nurse-Family Partnership programs in Orange County, contact Marcia Salomon at 714-834-8218 or visit www.nursefamilypartnership.org.
Smoke from Freeway Complex Fire in Orange County Continues to Pose Potential Public Health Danger

(Santa Ana) – Smoke from the Freeway Complex Fire in Orange County may pose a health danger to county residents and visitors, especially those in certain high-risk groups. In addition, continued warm temperatures forecast for today may also contribute to the public health danger.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) says all of Orange County will be directly impacted by smoke today and will have unhealthy air quality. Everyone in Orange County should avoid any vigorous outdoor or indoor exertion today.

People with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly, and children should remain indoors as much as possible. Keep your windows and doors closed unless it is extremely hot inside. If indoor temperatures are an issue, visit a public facility that is air conditioned, such as a library or community center, or visit a shopping mall or other public location that is climate-controlled. At home, run your air conditioner if you have one. Keep the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent bringing additional smoke inside. In your car, run your air conditioner on re-circulation mode.

“Among those who can be most directly affected by smoke exposure are individuals with heart disease, those with lung disease or asthma, older adults, children and pregnant women,” said County Health Officer Dr. Eric Handler. “Seek medical attention if you have symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue. Air pollution levels from the fire can change rapidly, depending on weather conditions, so individuals in these high-risk groups should take precautions until the situation is over.” People should also keep their airways (nose and mouth) moist by drinking extra amounts of water. This helps your body filter out potentially harmful particles in the smoke.

Additional information about the health impacts of wildfire smoke can be found on the AQMD website at www.aqmd.gov.

# # #
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 18, 2008

Contact: Howard Sutter
(714) 834-2178

Air Quality Improves in Orange County
But Some Areas Still Impacted by Smoke from Freeway Complex Fire

(Santa Ana) – The South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) says air quality may still reach Unhealthy levels in North Orange County today, although air quality across the region has improved significantly with greater control of the recent wildfires including the Freeway Complex Fire.

The latest AQMD forecast states that air quality may reach Unhealthy levels in areas that are still directly impacted by smoke. Areas that are farther from the active burning may still experience periods of air quality in the Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups range, or higher, when impacted by smoke. All individuals are urged to exercise caution and avoid unnecessary outdoor activities in any area directly impacted by smoke. This includes areas where residents can see or smell smoke.

“While we are thankful that air quality is improving, there are still areas near the fire zones where Unhealthy air quality remains a concern,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “In addition, those who have reentered the fire areas and are working in soot and ash should use respiratory protection, such as particulate filtering masks, to protect their health.”

If you are in an area that is still directly impacted by smoke, you should avoid vigorous exertion. In these same areas, people with respiratory or heart disease, the elderly, and children should remain indoors as much as possible. Keep your windows and doors closed unless it is extremely hot inside. If indoor temperatures are an issue, visit a public facility that is air conditioned, such as a library or community center, or visit a shopping mall or other public location that is climate-controlled. At home, run your air conditioner if you have one. Keep the fresh air intake closed and the filter clean to prevent bringing additional smoke inside. In your car, run your air conditioner on re-circulation mode.

Air pollution levels from fires can change rapidly, depending on weather conditions, so individuals in high-risk groups should take precautions until the fires have been fully extinguished. Additional information about the health impacts of wildfire smoke can be found on the AQMD website at www.aqmd.gov.

# # #
For Immediate Release
November 19, 2008

Keep Your Thanksgiving Meal Safe from Foodborne Illness

(Santa Ana) – As the Thanksgiving holiday draws near, consumers are encouraged to pay special attention to the handling and preparation of foods to help prevent foodborne illness from ruining a holiday meal. Traditional Thanksgiving food items such as poultry, dressings and gravy are delicious holiday standards, but can also be sources where bacteria can thrive.

"Taking a few simple precautionary steps during the preparation of your Thanksgiving meal will help keep foodborne illness from ruining your holiday celebration," said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer.

Bacteria such as Salmonella, Campylobacter and E. coli are the primary causes of foodborne illness in the United States. These types of bacteria grow rapidly on foods that are moist, rich in protein and held at temperatures between 41°F and 135°F.

To keep bacteria and foodborne illness from your holiday meals, follow these simple preparation guidelines:

- Thaw frozen turkey inside the refrigerator on the bottom shelf in its original wrapping. Make sure that other foods are above the thawing turkey to prevent contamination. Thawing a moderate sized turkey in this manner may take one to three days. If time does not permit a gradual thaw, place the frozen unwrapped turkey in a clean shallow container and allow cool running water to flow across the surface with sufficient velocity to flush loose particles down the drain.
- Wash your hands, utensils, cutting boards and other items that have been in contact with raw meat or poultry with soap and hot water to prevent contaminating other foods or re-contaminating the cooked turkey.
- Set the oven temperature to 325°F or higher.
- Use a meat thermometer to make sure that meat and poultry are cooked all the way through. Place the thermometer into the thickest section of meat or poultry.
- Cook the whole turkey to an internal temperature of at least 165°F. The recommended cooking time for your turkey can be obtained from instructions on the poultry wrapper, a cookbook or you can call the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Meat and Poultry Hotline at (888) 674-6854. The Partnership for Food Safety Education also offers turkey roasting information online at www.fightbac.org/content/view/199/10.
- When serving food buffet style, the key is to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Hot foods can be kept hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers and warming trays or foods can be kept cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice.
- Don’t let turkey, dressing or gravy sit at room temperature for more than two hours. These foods are particularly high in protein and moisture and should be kept above 135°F or below 41°F at all times. Promptly refrigerate or freeze leftovers in covered shallow containers.
- Use leftovers within 4 days, except stuffing and gravy which should be used within 2 days. Reheat leftovers to at least 165°F prior to serving.

The Orange County Health Care Agency’s Food Protection Program participates in the inspection of retail and wholesale food facilities to prevent foodborne illness. It also promotes the safe and sanitary preparation and service of foods. For more information about the program or to obtain guidelines for safe food preparation call (714) 433-6000 or visit www.ocfoodinfo.com.

# # #
Flu Shots Can Help Keep the Holidays Healthy – National Influenza Vaccination Week is December 8–14

(Santa Ana) – The holidays are a time when friends and family gather in celebration but they can also be a time when influenza viruses are circulating, so a seasonal flu shot is an important preventive measure to help ensure a happy holiday.

“As people travel during the holidays, they may be exposed to influenza viruses and other seasonal illnesses,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “In addition to an annual flu shot, we encourage everyone to take a few simple precautions during the holidays to protect their health and the health of others. These precautions include frequent hand washing, covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and protecting your overall health by eating nutritious foods, getting enough rest and drinking plenty of non-alcoholic fluids.”

Influenza activity in Orange County has been sporadic so far this season, but influenza activity can peak as late as February or March, so there is still plenty of time to benefit from the protection provided by a flu shot. Information about the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) flu shot program is available by calling the HCA Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 or by visiting the Health Care Agency’s website at www.ochealthinfo.com/public/flu. HCA’s seasonal flu shot program provides free flu shots to eligible individuals including:

To keep bacteria and foodborne illness from your holiday meals, follow these simple preparation guidelines.

- People 50 years of age or older
- People with chronic disease like heart disease, asthma or other lung disease
- Children aged six months through 59 months (less than 5 years of age)
- Children or adolescents receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- Women who are pregnant or will be pregnant during flu season
- People with health conditions that suppress their immune or respiratory system
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
- Health care workers
- Anyone living with or caring for children under 5 years, adults over 50 years of age, or other individuals who are at higher risk of complications from influenza

Other family members can get a flu shot or the FluMist nasal flu vaccine through private health care providers such as community clinics, physician offices, urgent care centers or pharmacies. Visit the American Lung Association website at [www.flucliniclocator.org](http://www.flucliniclocator.org) for assistance in finding a flu shot.

# # #
Home Heating Safety Emphasized During Cold Weather

(Santa Ana) – Overnight temperatures in some areas of Orange County will dip below 40° this week, with Public Health officials urging area residents to use caution when heating their home.

“While Southern California enjoys moderate winters when compared to other areas of the United States, the temperatures in our area this week will be colder than average,” said Dr. Eric G. Hander, County Health Officer. “Almost every winter, there are cases in California of people who are overcome by carbon monoxide gas after bringing a charcoal grill indoors to provide heat. Never use a charcoal grill or other similar fuel-burning device to heat the inside your home.”

Residents are also cautioned against using their kitchen range or oven to heat their homes. Home furnaces and heaters should be inspected periodically, with needed repairs performed by a qualified and licensed heating or plumbing contractor. If space heaters are used, make sure there is nothing within three feet of the heater that could catch on fire, such as bedding, drapes or furniture. Never cover your space heater and never leave children unattended near a space heater. In the event that electric power is lost during a storm, never use a gasoline powered generator indoors, in a garage or near doors or windows where air may enter a home due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that at high levels of exposure can be fatal. Low levels of carbon monoxide poisoning can be confused with flu symptoms, food poisoning or other illnesses and can have a long term health risk if left unattended. Some of the symptoms of low level exposure include shortness of breath, mild nausea and mild headaches. Moderate levels of carbon monoxide exposure can present with headaches, dizziness, nausea, and light-headedness. Every home should have a carbon monoxide detector, which is very similar to a smoke detector.

To stay warm while outdoors during cold weather, remember to wear several layers of clothing with an outer layer that is waterproof. While current forecasts do not call for below freezing temperatures, area residents are also reminded to consider the needs of their pets for warm, dry shelter from the cold.

For more information on cold weather safety, visit The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov or the California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services website at www.oes.ca.gov.

# # #
Precautions Urged for Travel Associated with Lunar New Year – Tieng Viet

(Santa Ana) – People traveling for the Lunar New Year to countries where avian influenza A (H5N1) cases have been reported are urged to take precautions before, during and after their travel.

Before traveling abroad, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/travel for current travel health information. Make sure all of your routine and travel-related vaccinations are up-to-date and you have medications to prevent malaria if you are traveling to a malaria-endemic area. Pack a travel health kit containing your routine medications, basic first aid supplies, insect repellant and alcohol-based hand gels to clean your hands. Do not travel if you are sick.

The celebration of the Lunar New Year results in increased travel between the United States and many Asian countries. In the last year, human cases of avian influenza A (H5N1), or bird flu, have been reported in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Egypt, Indonesia, and Vietnam. Most cases have had contact with poultry or other birds and very limited human to human transmission has been identified. Between 2003 and 2007, human cases of H5N1 were also seen in Azerbaijan, Djibouti, Iraq, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Thailand and Turkey. Additional countries in Asia, Europe and Africa have reported H5N1 infections in birds. While there are not any restrictions on travel to these countries, certain precautions are recommended:

- During travel, avoid direct contact with birds, including poultry and wild birds and do not visit poultry farms or bird markets where live birds are kept. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand gels for hand cleaning when soap and water is not available. Make sure that all poultry products, including eggs, are thoroughly cooked before eating.
• After returning, monitor your health for 7 days. If you develop a fever with cough, sore throat or trouble breathing, contact your physician and provide information about your symptoms, where you traveled and if you had direct contact with poultry or with sick people.

• Orange County physicians treating patients with fever and respiratory symptoms who have traveled to areas with avian influenza A (H5N1) cases in humans or birds in the 7 days prior to the onset of symptoms should contact Public Health immediately at (714) 834-8180 to discuss appropriate testing.

To protect their overall health, travelers should take additional precautions such as prevention of mosquito bites, avoiding contaminated food and water, and avoiding contact with animals. See the CDC travel website for more information.

# # #
Thông Báo Cháy
Xin lập tức phổ biến
January 15, 2009

Liên lạc: Deanne Thompson
(714) 834-2178

Khuyến Thân Trong Khi Du Lịch Nhận Đtíp Tết Nguyên Đán

(Santa Ana) – Những người đi du lịch vào dịp Tết Nguyên Đán đến các quốc gia có bảo cáo về những trường hợp bị bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1) cần thận trọng trước khi đi, giữa chuyến đi và sau chuyến đi du lịch của họ.


Để đón mừng Năm Mới Âm Lịch, lượng khách du lịch đã tăng giữa Hoa Kỳ và nhiều quốc gia Châu Á. Năm ngoái, những trường hợp người bị mắc bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1) hay bệnh cúm đến từ loài vật có cảnh đã được báo cáo tại Bangladesh, Căm Bốt, Trung Hoa, Ai Cập, Nam Dương và Việt Nam. Nhiều trường hợp bị bệnh do sự tiếp xúc với gia cầm hay loài thú vật có cảnh và chỉ một số ít trường hợp là do người truyền sang người. Giữa năm 2003 và 2007, các trường hợp người bị mắc bệnh H5N1 cũng được tìm thấy ở Azerbaijan, Djibouti, Iraq, Cộng Hoà Nhân Dân Lào, Miền Điển, Nigeria, Pakistan, Thái Lan và Thổ Nhĩ Kỳ. Ngoài ra tại những quốc gia Châu Á, Châu Âu và Châu Phi khác cùng đã có báo cáo các loại vật có cảnh bị lây bệnh H5N1. Mặc dù không có bất cứ sự hạn chế nào khi thăm viếng các quốc gia này, chức chức lối khuyến về sự cần trọng vấn được đặt ra:
- Giữ a cuộc du hành, tránh tiếp xúc trực tiếp với các loại vật có cánh, bao gồm gà vịt và những loại chim hoang dã và dựng thăm viếng các trại chăn nuôi gà vịt hay chờ bán chim là nơi nuôi giữ các loại chim chcộc còn sống. Rửa tay thường xuyên với xà phòng và nước, hay bằng loại đầu rửa tay đặc chế bằng chất cồn (alcohol-bases hand gel) ở những nơi không sẵn nước và xà phòng. Hãy chắc chắn tã tãi thực phẩm đến từ gà vịt, bao gồm trứng phải được nấu thật chín trước khi ăn.
- Sau khi trở về, theo dõi sức khỏe của mình trong 7 ngày. Nếu quý vị bị nóng sốt kèm theo ho, rát cò hay khó thở, liên lạc với bác sĩ của quý vị và cung cấp chi tiết các triệu chứng, nơi quý vị đến du lịch và nếu quý vị từng tiếp xúc trực tiếp với gà vịt hay với người bệnh.
- Các bác sĩ hành nghề trong Quản Cam chịu trách nhiệm bênh nhân bị các triệu chứng đường hô hấp từng du lịch trước đó 7 ngày ở những vùng xảy ra các trường hợp bị bệnh cúm gia cầm A (H5N1) để sau đó có các triệu chứng bệnh, cần lập tức liên lạc với văn phòng Y Tế Công Chúng (Public Health) ở số (714) 834-8180 để bán về những thủ nghiệm thích đáng.

Nhắm bảo vệ toàn bộ sức khỏe, khách du lịch cần cẩn thận nhiều hơn như ngủ bij muỗi căn, tránh ăn thực phẩm và uống nước bị nhiễm độc, và tránh tiếp xúc với sức vật. Hãy vào trang mạng điện tử dành cho người đi du lịch của Trung Tâm Kiểm Dịch (CDC) để biết thêm tin tức.

# # #
For Immediate Release
January 29, 2009

Orange County Groups Included on List of Sites Receiving Products Recalled due to Possible Salmonella Contamination

(Santa Ana) – Four Orange County organizations may have received peanut butter cookies or cookie dough recalled because of possible contamination with a strain of Salmonella, according to information released January 28 by the California Department of Public Health.

Consumers are advised not to eat or handle certain products from Dough-To-Go, Inc., of Santa Clara, which were distributed in 30 counties in California, including Orange County. Dough-To-Go frozen peanut butter cookies and frozen peanut butter cookie dough are distributed under the Dough-To-Go and Jane Dough labels. The affected products were sold as group fundraising items between August 2008 and January 16, 2009. According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), recalled products were distributed by Diamond Fundraising to the following organizations in Orange County:

- John F. Kennedy High School Band in La Palma
- Montevideo Elementary School in Mission Viejo
- Philip J. Reilly Elementary School in Mission Viejo, and
- A Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) group in South Orange County

Consumers can check to determine if they have recalled product by examining the lot codes printed on the side of the product’s box. The following lot codes have been recalled:

- CBB-335-40 (12 cookies per case)
- CBB-330-20 (72 cookies per case)
- CBR-190-20 (80 cookies per case)
- CBR-330-20 (80 cookies per case)
- CBR-330-12 (144 cookies per case)
- CBR-190-18 (18 pound pail)
- CBR-320-18 (18 pound pail)
- FUN-001-0U (36 cookies per case)
- FUN-320-00 (36 cookies per case)
- CMB-PBU-30 (24 cookies per case)

No illnesses associated with Dough-To-Go peanut butter cookie dough have been reported. Consumers with these products are advised to dispose of them. Individuals with questions may contact Dough-To-Go at 1-800-220-2339. For a current list of products containing peanut butter that are included in the nationwide recall, visit the Food and Drug Administration website at www.fda.gov.

# # #
Local Food Establishments Receive Awards of Excellence

(Santa Ana) – From a qualifying group of 9,613 food facilities throughout the County, the Health Care Agency’s Environmental Health Division has issued 2,821 Award of Excellence certificates to local Orange County food facilities this month. Environmental Health’s Food Protection Program recognizes these facilities for their outstanding food safety and sanitation practices during 2008. The certificate acknowledges the dedication of each recipient and highlights their diligent efforts in preventing health code violations.

Included in the Award of Excellence Program are food facilities such as restaurants, catering establishments, meat/seafood markets, retail bakeries, supermarkets, supermarket/bakery combinations, and public and private schools with food production service. A complete list of all recipients and award criteria is available online at www.ocfoodinfo.com/foodaward.htm.

The Food Protection Program created this annual Award of Excellence to provide an incentive for food establishments to consistently meet or exceed health and safety standards for food facility operations. Eligible food establishments throughout the County may receive this award each year that they exhibit excellent food safety and sanitation practices.

The Food Protection Program focuses on the inspection of retail food facilities in order to promote the safe and sanitary preparation and service of foods, prevent foodborne illness, and protect consumers from adulterated food products. For more information about the Health Care Agency’s Food Protection Program, visit www.ocfoodinfo.com.
Hospital Emergency Rooms Feel Impact of H1N1 Alert

(Santa Ana) – Hospital emergency rooms in Orange County are busy; due in part to concern related to worldwide alerts for H1N1 Influenza A virus (Swine Flu).

“Emergency rooms are reporting an increase in visits for possible H1N1 Influenza A virus infection, resulting in longer waits and, in some cases, an increase in the number of hospitals that temporarily close their emergency rooms to new patients being transported by ambulance, a condition we call diversion,” said Samuel J. Stratton, MD, MPH, Medical Director for Orange County Emergency Medical Services. “We need the public’s help in limiting emergency room visits to those that are medical emergencies, so that resources can be used to care for seriously ill patients.”

Presently, there has been limited spread of H1N1 Influenza A virus in the United States. Most people presenting to emergency rooms with viral illness symptoms are not at high risk for H1N1 Influenza A virus infection. Common viral illnesses do not require medical attention. Typical care may include acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever, drinking enough liquids to prevent dehydration, eating light meals and getting adequate bed rest. If symptoms persist or worsen, individuals should contact their personal physician or regular health care provider. Indications of more serious illness that might need immediate medical care include:

- Difficulty breathing
- Severe vomiting
- Excessive drowsiness
- Fever over 100 degrees, especially in young children, the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions
- Signs of dehydration in children include being unable to take adequate amounts of fluids, crying without tears, and urinating less often than normal.

Limiting the spread of possible influenza and other viral illnesses is important. To help prevent the spread of viruses:

- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Wash your hands frequently and before possible close contact with others who may be ill
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth and then touching others without washing your hands
- Don’t share eating utensils, drinking glasses or other personal items
- Stay home if you are sick or have symptoms of flu-like illness

# # #
THREE MORE PROBABLE INFLUENZA A (H1N1) CASES REPORTED IN ORANGE COUNTY

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) has identified three more probable Influenza A (H1N1), or swine influenza, cases. This brings to five the total number of probable cases in Orange County. The cases meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) criteria for a probable case, as they are confirmed as Influenza A, and cannot be sub-typed at our laboratory. These probable cases are subject to confirmation through additional laboratory testing before being considered confirmed cases.

The new probable cases are:

- An 8-year-old female resident of Placentia
- An 8-year-old female visitor to Orange County
- A 5-year-old female resident of Santa Ana

Public Health Epidemiology specialists have investigated each of the new probable cases, including evaluating the health of family members and other close contacts. Based on the investigation of the new probable cases, and in consultation with the California Department of Public Health, the Health Care Agency has determined that no school closings are indicated at this time.

Recommended precautions to reduce exposure to influenza viruses include:

- washing your hands with soap and water frequently
- covering your cough and sneeze with a tissue or your sleeve
- staying home if you are ill, and
- avoiding contact with people who are ill.

For more information and the latest updates about the Influenza A (H1N1) in Orange County, visit the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com.

## ##
For Immediate Release  
May 3, 2009 

Testing Confirms Two H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) Cases  
In Orange County 

(Santa Ana) – Results provided by the California Department of Public Health have identified the first two confirmed cases of H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) in Orange County. The two cases, an 18-year-old male from Irvine and a 26-year-old male from Irvine, were first classified as probable H1N1 Flu cases and were announced by the Orange County Health Care Agency on Thursday, April 30.

In addition, the Health Care Agency has identified two new probable H1N1 Flu cases through testing conducted at the County’s Public Health Laboratory. As a result, Orange County currently has two (2) confirmed and seven (7) probable H1N1 Flu cases.

“To limit the spread of this and other influenza viruses, it is very important that individuals who are sick stay at home until they are symptom-free,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “The best measures to prevent the spread of influenza viruses are simple things like frequent handwashing with soap and water and covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your sleeve. People should also limit their contact with people who are sick and avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth, because germs spread in this way.”

For information about H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) in Orange County, visit the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com.

# # #
School Dismissal Associated With H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) has instructed officials of the Fountain Valley School District to dismiss students at Fred Moiola Elementary School, 9790 Finch Avenue, Fountain Valley, beginning Monday, May 4 after the identification of a probable H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) case associated with the school. It is anticipated that the school will be closed to students for seven (7) days.

The action was taken late Sunday night as the result of information received during the follow-up investigation of a probable H1N1 Flu case involving an 11-year-old male resident of Westminster. School officials were contacted and reported to HCA Public Health representatives that there had been an increase in absenteeism and illness during the week of April 27-May 1. As a result, the Orange County Health Care Agency has instructed the school to dismiss students beginning on Monday, May 4. The decision to reopen will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and will depend on whether additional illnesses are detected. All school-related activities and gatherings are also to be cancelled. While school is dismissed, students should avoid gathering outside of school.

“To limit the spread of this and other influenza viruses, it is very important that individuals who are sick stay at home until they are symptom-free,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “The best measures to prevent the spread of influenza viruses are simple things like frequent handwashing with soap and water and covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your sleeve. People should also limit their contact with people who are sick and avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth, because germs spread in this way.”

For information about H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) in Orange County, visit the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com.

# # #
Public Health Officials Lift Directive to Dismiss Classes at Moiola Elementary School

(Santa Ana) – Based on revised guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued today, the Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA) has notified Fred Moiola Elementary School that students may return to school.

CDC is currently recommending that school dismissal is not advised for a suspected or confirmed case of novel influenza A (H1N1) unless there is significant faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school’s ability to function. “When the original decision to dismiss classes was made, we indicated we would evaluate the decision on an on-going basis,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “We are pleased that the revised guidance from the CDC allowed us to reconsider the need for continued student dismissal at Moiola Elementary School.”

Following review of the circumstances around the student dismissal at Fred Moiola Elementary School in Fountain Valley, OCHCA is advising school officials today that school may resume tomorrow with specific recommendations.

- Reinforce with parents that children must not come to school if ill
- Promptly separate from others and send home any students and staff who have influenza-like illness
- Review and reinforce with students good hygiene practices (see below)
- Monitor absenteeism and determine the reasons for absences
- Report any unusual absenteeism, increase in febrile illness or clusters of illness among students and/or staff to Orange County Public Health

General prevention measures include the following.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
• If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
• Do not share personal items such as towels or utensils.

For information about H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) in Orange County, visit the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com. General information about H1N1 Flu is also available through the Health Care Agency’s Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448 or through the California Department of Public Health’s H1N1 Hotline at (888) 865-0564.

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For Immediate Release

May 7, 2009

Contact:  Greg Boswell
(714) 834-2791

ORANGE COUNTY IMPLEMENTS THE NATION’S FIRST
COUNTYWIDE COMPREHENSIVE STROKE-NEUROLOGY SYSTEM

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency today announced the launch of a ground-breaking Stroke-Neurology Receiving Center program. Much like the successful Trauma and Cardiac Receiving Centers, Stroke-Neurology Receiving Center hospitals will offer highly trained medical experts and leading edge technologies, setting a new standard of care for stroke patients.

Recent medical research shows that certain stroke treatments result in better outcomes for stroke victims. These treatment methods require early identification of stroke and immediate care by stroke experts. “For the Stroke-Neurology Program to be effective, time to treatment must be minimal and expert medical care must always be available,” said Dr. Samuel Stratton, Medical Director of the Health Care Agency’s Emergency Medical Services division.

The Health Care Agency worked with a coalition of stroke advocates to develop Stroke-Neurology Receiving Center criteria with an emphasis on quality of care, patient safety and 24-hour availability of Neurologists, Neurosurgeons, Radiologists, Nurses and Emergency Medicine physicians who are expert in managing stroke patients. These professionals will use specialized neurological techniques that have been shown to provide the best outcomes for stroke patients. “Bringing patients to a hospital that specializes in treating acute stroke will provide a tremendous advantage in surviving and limiting stroke effects,” said Dr. Stratton.

Six hospitals in Orange County have currently been designated as Stroke-Neurology Receiving Center facilities. The Health Care Agency anticipates the designation of additional hospitals in the near future. The six hospitals designated in the initial phase include:

- Fountain Valley Regional Medical Center
- Hoag Memorial Hospital Presbyterian
- Mission Hospital and Medical Center
- St. Joseph Hospital of Orange
- University of California, Irvine Medical Center
- Western Medical Center – Santa Ana

More information about stroke can be found at http://www.stroke.org

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Awards Ceremony to Highlight Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Personnel during EMS Week May 17 – 23, 2009

(Santa Ana) – In observance of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Week May 17-23, 2009 the Orange County Health Care Agency will host the 2009 EMS Week Awards Ceremony on Tuesday, May 19 in Bash Auditorium at Western Medical Center, Santa Ana located at 1001 N. Tustin Ave to honor and recognize individual EMS system participants who take exemplary action.

Metro Cities Fire Authority Dispatcher John Delgado will be recognized during the Awards Ceremony for helping to deliver Orange County resident Kelly Gendry’s daughter Emily. With her child near term, Kelly awoke one August morning only to realize that ‘today was going to be the day’ and made plans to head to her hospital for delivery. However, little Emily was on her way before Kelly and her husband made it out the door. 9-1-1 Dispatcher John Delgado provided clear and concise instructions to Kelly’s husband Tom to help him safely deliver Emily. She was born before paramedics arrived on scene.

The Gendry family will be on hand during the Awards Ceremony to recognize John Delgado for his positive contributions and efforts in helping to deliver baby Emily. Along with John, additional EMS personnel will be recognized for several award categories including Great Saves; Courage Under Fire; EMS System Advocacy; Exceptional Performance; and Compassion in EMS to name a few.

EMS Week is celebrated yearly to recognize the efforts of dedicated physicians, nurses, paramedics, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, law enforcement officers, lifeguards, communications personnel, educators, and volunteers for their contributions and dedication to the Orange County community. To learn more about EMS Week, visit www.emsweek.org.

# # #
Fruit and Veggie Fest 2009 - Eat Right When Money’s Tight!
Sponsored by the Network for a Healthy California—Orange County Region Retail Program

WHAT: Fruit and Veggie Fest will be a fun-filled day of educational, interactive activities designed to highlight ways families can make healthy choices on a limited budget. Visitors to the San Clemente Ranch Market-Casa de El Toro Rojo will learn from local mothers and partners about the importance of healthy eating and how to buy and prepare nutritious meals and snacks. This event is part of a month-long statewide effort by the California Department of Public Health’s Network for a Healthy California-Retail Program to empower low-income families to become Champions for Change by making healthy, active living a priority.

WHY: Many Orange County residents need to find ways to feed their families on a limited budget. Fruit and Veggie Fest is designed to help families learn about food assistance programs and consume healthy foods which can help them reduce their risk of developing serious health problems, such as obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancers.

WHEN: Friday, May 22, 2009
9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Toast to Health ceremonies at 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

WHERE: San Clemente Ranch Market – Casa de El Toro Rojo
101 W. El Portal, San Clemente, CA 92672
(El Portal/N. El Camino Real)

WHO:
• Network for a Healthy California – Orange County Region, County of Orange Health Care Agency
• Sonja Weiss, owner, San Clemente Ranch Market – Casa de El Toro Rojo
• Megan Gunther, Camino Health Center – Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
• Veronica Vega, Network South County Champion Mom
• Aida Marchesi, WIC South County Champion Mom
• Learning Link Preschool, Las Palmas Elementary, Capistrano Unified School District
• Paulina Avendano, M.D., Southern Orange City Pediatrics

- MORE -
PHOTO OP:

- Preschoolers from Learning Link - Las Palmas Elementary will make strawberry costumes, parade to San Clemente Ranch Market, perform a fruit-veggie dance and become “food critics” as they taste and rate a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Invited guests will lift glasses of fruit and vegetable juice and make a toast to healthy eating and active lifestyles.
- *Network* Champion Mom Veronica Vega will co-host a booth with dietitians to help teach customers how to buy and prepare healthy meals on a limited budget.
- WIC Champion Mom Aida Marchesi will discuss the importance of WIC services and help prepare a nutritious fruit smoothie, featuring strawberries and low-fat milk.

# # #
Youth-Created “Tobacco and Hollywood” Ads Unveiled

(Santa Ana) – To help youth make informed decisions and to counter the influence that smoking in movies has on youth, the County of Orange Health Care Agency’s Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) is joining with community leaders, educators and students for a series of special events to unveil youth-created “Tobacco and Hollywood” bus shelter posters.

The following bus shelter unveiling events will take place June 3 and 4 in the cities of La Habra and Santa Ana:

**June 3, 2009**

9:30 a.m.
City of La Habra (corner of La Habra Blvd. and Palm St.)
Youth Artists Sara Paek, Christina Rodriguez and Jeanette Salmeron from Sonora High School

10:30 a.m.
City of La Habra (corner of La Habra and Cypress)
Youth Artist Cindy Gonzales from Sonora High School

11:30 a.m.
City of La Habra (corner of Harbor Blvd. and Lambert)
Youth Artist Brianna Flores from Sonora High School

**June 4, 2009**

9:30 a.m.
City of Santa Ana (corner of Main St. and 10th St.)
Youth Artist Lilian Jang from Orange County High School of the Arts

10:30 a.m.
City of Santa Ana (corner of 17th St. and Main St.)
Youth Artist Sasha Kedzie from Orange County High School of the Arts

11:30 a.m.
City of Santa Ana (corner of Bristol St. and 17th St.)
Youth Artist Letisha Suyanto from Orange County High School of the Arts

-More-
1:30 p.m.
City of Santa Ana (corner of Civic Center Dr. and Bristol St.)
Youth Artist Anna Nguyen from Orange County High School of the Arts

2:30 p.m.
City of Santa Ana (corner of Civic Center Dr. and Ross St.)
Youth Artist Kelsey Byrne from Orange County High School of the Arts

Smoking in movies has been shown in research studies to increase the likelihood that youth will start smoking. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has repeatedly cited exposure to tobacco use in media as a major factor in youth smoking. Youth who see smoking on television and other media are more likely to start smoking than youth who are not exposed to smoking in media. Each year an estimated 390,000 teens start smoking because of exposure to smoking in movies and 120,000 will die prematurely as a result, according to a national study published in the Journal of Pediatrics.

The mission of the Tobacco Use Prevention Program (TUPP) is to reduce tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke in Orange County by collaborating with community organizations, public agencies and committed individuals. TUPP offers youth and adults tobacco education, as well as free smoking cessation and prevention programs. Information about cessation services for adults and teens is available by calling (866) NEW-LUNG or (866) 639-5864. More information about TUPP can be found online at www.ochealthinfo.com/tupp.

# # #
For Immediate Release
June 8, 2009

Contact: Deanne Thompson
(714) 834-2178

ORANGE COUNTY REPORTS FIRST DEATH FROM NOVEL H1N1 INFLUENZA

(Santa Ana) – A middle-aged man is the first person in Orange County to die of novel H1N1 influenza. The Orange County Public Health laboratory confirmed that the man, who had pre-existing health conditions, was infected with the novel H1N1 influenza (“swine flu”) virus.

“Our hearts and sympathies go out to this man’s family,” County Health Officer Dr. Eric Handler said. “His death is a sad reminder of the serious threat posed by H1N1 influenza and other influenza viruses. It is important for everyone to continue practicing good respiratory and hand hygiene to limit the transmission of influenza germs from person to person.”

The man is the fourth Californian to die with the novel H1N1 influenza virus. Statewide there have been more than 1,000 confirmed and probable cases of the novel H1N1 influenza virus. As of June 8, Orange County is reporting 86 confirmed and probable cases. While most cases of novel H1N1 flu have been relatively mild, at least 62 infected people in the state have been hospitalized. Most of those hospitalized had underlying medical conditions.

Currently there is no vaccine available to protect against the novel H1N1 influenza, but there are actions that people can take to help prevent the spread of germs that cause influenza illness:

- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or into your elbow.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water and use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid social gatherings if you are ill or if you have a medical condition that puts you at risk for flu complications

The symptoms of novel H1N1 influenza are similar to the symptoms of seasonal influenza and include fever, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with the virus. If you are sick or think you may have H1N1 influenza consult your healthcare provider.

For more information and the latest updates about the novel Influenza A (H1N1) in Orange County, visit the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com.

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For immediate release:  
June 24, 2009  
Contact: Deanne Thompson  
(714) 834-2178  

Take the Test, Take Control  
June 27 is National HIV Testing Day  

(Santa Ana) – Thousands of Americans will be tested for HIV on June 27, taking the test and taking control of their health. National HIV Testing Day promotes testing and early diagnosis of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and is a good reminder that HIV testing is available year-round throughout Orange County, for free and at low cost, and test results can remain confidential or completely anonymous.

Orange County ranks fifth among California’s 58 counties in cumulative AIDS cases reported through 2008. In 2008, Orange County reported 283 AIDS cases, an increase of 17% from 2007. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that about one-fourth of the more than one million people living with HIV in the United States don’t know they are infected. In Orange County, it is estimated that close to 1,600 persons have HIV and are not aware of it.

HIV testing is a routine part of general healthcare and is a critical step in reducing HIV infections. Knowing your HIV status empowers you to help prevent the spread of the disease. “Once you know your status you can take steps to protect your health, the health of your partners, and the health of your community” said Martin Salas, Co-Chair of the HIV Prevention Planning Committee. In Orange County, the following agencies offer confidential and anonymous free or low-cost testing:

- **Orange County Health Care Agency**: 17th Street Clinic, (714) 834-8787: walk-ins only - Mon., Wed., and Thurs. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Tue. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Fri. 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., and REACH mobile testing throughout the County, (866) 337-3224
- **The Center Orange County**: (714) 534-0862; call for times and locations
- **AIDS Services Foundation**: (949) 809-8775: walk-ins only - Tue., Wed., and Thurs. 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Laguna Beach Community Clinic**: Tue., Wed., Thurs., and Sat. - call for hours, (949) 494-0761 (there is a charge for services, call for details).
- For more testing sites and information call the AIDS Hotline at (800) 367-2437 or go online: [www.AIDShotline.org](http://www.AIDShotline.org)

Make a difference today! Get tested for HIV; tell a friend to get tested for HIV; and consider joining the HIV Prevention Planning Committee to make your voice heard! For more information on the Prevention Planning Committee or HIV services in Orange County, contact the Health Care Agency at (714) 834-8711. Make HIV testing a part of your routine healthcare, Take the Test, Take Control!

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Contact: Deanne Thompson  
June 24, 2009  
(714) 834-2178  

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Latinos are especially affected by HIV/AIDS. In 2008, almost half (46%) of Orange County AIDS cases and 35% of all HIV cases reported were Latino. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that about one-fourth of the more than one million people living with HIV in the United States don’t know they are infected. In Orange County, it is estimated that close to 1,600 persons have HIV and are not aware of it.

HIV testing is a routine part of general healthcare and is a critical step in reducing HIV infections. Knowing your HIV status empowers you to help prevent the spread of the disease. “Once you know your status you can take steps to protect your health, the health of your partners, and the health of your community” said Martin Salas, Co-Chair of the HIV Prevention Planning Committee. In Orange County, the following agencies offer confidential and anonymous free or low-cost testing:

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Make a difference today! Get tested for HIV; tell a friend to get tested for HIV; and consider joining the HIV Prevention Planning Committee to make your voice heard! For more information on the Prevention Planning Committee or HIV services in Orange County, contact the Health Care Agency at (714) 834-8711. Make HIV testing a part of your routine healthcare, Take the Test, Take Control!

# # #
For immediate release:  
Junio 2009

¡Hazte la Prueba – Toma el Control!

27 de Junio, Día Nacional para la Prueba del VIH

(Santa Ana) – Este 27 de Junio, miles de Americanos se harán la prueba del VIH para tomar el control de su salud. El Día Nacional para la Prueba del VIH promueve la detección temprana del VIH, el virus que causa el SIDA, y nos recuerda que la prueba del VIH está disponible todo el año en el Condado de Orange gratis y a bajo costo, y los resultados pueden mantenerse confidenciales o completamente anónimos.

Los Latinos se encuentran especialmente afectados por el VIH/SIDA. En el 2008, casi la mitad (46%) de los casos de SIDA en el Condado de Orange y 35% de todos los casos reportados de VIH fueron de Latinos. El Centro de Control y Prevención estima que casi un cuarto de más de un millón de gente con VIH que vive en los Estados Unidos no sabe que está infectada. En el Condado de Orange, se estima que cerca de 1,600 personas con VIH no saben que lo tienen.

La prueba del VIH es parte de una rutina de cuidado general para la salud, y es un paso importante para reducir el número de infecciones con el VIH. Saber si tienes el VIH te da el poder de prevenir el contagio a otras personas. “Una vez que sabes si lo tienes o no, puedes proteger tu salud, la salud de tu pareja, y la salud de tu comunidad” dijo Martín Salas, Co-Chair del Comité de Prevención del VIH. Las siguientes agencias en el Condado de Orange ofrecen la prueba del VIH de manera confidencial y anónima, gratis o de bajo costo:

- **Agencia de Salud del Condado de Orange:** Clínica en la calle 17th, (714) 834-8787: No necesitas cita - Lunes, Miércoles y Jueves de 8 a.m. a 4 p.m., Martes 10 a.m. a 5 p.m., y Viernes de 9:30 a.m. a 4 p.m., y Clínica Móvil REACH varios sitios en el Condado, (866) 337-3224.
- **The Center Orange County:** (714) 534-0862: Llama para preguntar los días y el horario.
- **AIDS Services Foundation:** (949) 809-8775: no necesitas cita - Martes, Miércoles y Jueves de 2 p.m. a 6 p.m.
- **Laguna Beach Community Clinic:** (949) 494-0761 Martes, Miércoles, Jueves y Sábado – Llama para preguntar el horario (hay un costo por el servicio, llama para más detalles).

Para obtener más información y preguntar acerca de otros sitios donde hacerse la prueba, llama al teléfono (800) 367-2437 (AIDS Hotline) o ve a la página del Internet: [www.AIDShotline.org](http://www.AIDShotline.org)

¡Haz la diferencia hoy! Hazte la prueba del VIH; dile a un amigo que se haga la prueba; considera tu participación en el Comité de Planeación para la Prevención del VIH para que tu opinión sea escuchada. Si quieres obtener más información acerca del Comité de Planeación para la Prevención del VIH, llama a la Agencia de Salud al (714) 834-8711. Haz la prueba del VIH parte de tu rutina del cuidado de tu salud. ¡Hazte la Prueba. Toma el Control!

# # #
For Immediate Release
July 21, 2009

Contact: Deanne Thompson
(714) 834-2178

PRECAUTIONS URGED AS PANDEMIC (H1N1) 2009 INFLUENZA CONTINUES TO SPREAD

(Santa Ana) – Orange County health officials are urging the public to take precautionary measures to limit the spread of the novel H1N1 influenza virus (the World Health organization now calls this virus pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza).

“Most of us don’t think about influenza during the summer months, and we may not be exercising enough caution,” said County Health Officer Dr. Eric Handler. “Even though we are in mid-summer, the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza is continuing to spread from person to person causing illnesses. It is important to cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, wash your hands frequently, and stay home if you are sick.”

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza is now widespread in communities throughout California. Under new reporting guidelines, only hospitalized or fatal cases and clusters of cases in healthcare facilities, institutions, and other settings will be reported to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). Previously counties and local health jurisdictions reported every confirmed and probable case of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza to CDPH.

While most people with pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza experience relatively mild illness, Orange County has reported eleven fatalities associated with pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza. All of the individuals who died had pre-existing health conditions, making them more susceptible to complications with influenza.

A specific vaccine to protect against the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza is not expected to be available until late in the year; however, there are actions that people can take to help prevent the spread of germs that cause influenza illness:

- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or into your elbow.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water and use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid social gatherings if you are ill or if you have a medical condition that puts you at risk for influenza complications

The symptoms of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza are the same as symptoms of seasonal influenza and include fever, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. In addition, some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with the virus. If you are sick or think you may have pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza, stay home. If you have severe illness or are at risk for complications of influenza, consult your healthcare provider.
For more information and the latest updates about pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza in Orange County, visit the Health Care Agency website at www.ochealthinfo.com.

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ORANGE COUNTY CONFIRMS FIRST HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS CASE OF 2009

(Santa Ana) – A Fountain Valley woman in her forties has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) infection, becoming Orange County’s first confirmed symptomatic human WNV case of 2009.

The woman was hospitalized in early July with symptoms of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, and is now recovering at home. The woman may have been exposed outside of Orange County. This is the second human case of West Nile Virus reported in California this year. Nationally there are 26 cases, and no WNV-related deaths have been reported. Last year, 8 asymptomatic blood donors, 71 confirmed symptomatic human cases of West Nile Virus infection and 3 WNV-related deaths were reported in Orange County.

“While we are not seeing the level of West Nile Virus activity that we experienced last year, it is important for the community to recognize that West Nile Virus is endemic in Orange County, recurring every year during the summer months and continuing into the fall,” said Dr. Hildy Meyers, Medical Director of Epidemiology. “The best way to avoid West Nile Virus infection is to take precautionary measures to avoid mosquito bites.”

Recommended WNV precautions include:

- Emptying all standing water on your property to reduce areas in which mosquitoes may breed
- Making sure your window and door screens are in good condition
- Using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or products containing IR3535, always following label directions
- Limiting outdoor activity at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active
- Wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors
Most people who become infected with West Nile Virus do not experience symptoms or become seriously ill. Up to 20% of those infected with West Nile Virus will experience symptoms of West Nile fever, which may include fever, headache, body aches, nausea, tiredness, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash. Anyone who develops the more serious symptoms of West Nile Neuroinvasive Disease, such as severe headaches, neck stiffness, confusion, muscle weakness, or vision loss should seek medical care immediately. People over 50 years of age and those with certain medical conditions are at increased risk of serious complications from WNV infection.

Information on mosquito control is available on the Orange County Vector Control District’s website at www.ocvcd.org. Other websites with helpful information about West Nile Virus include:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov
- State of California www.westnile.ca.gov
- Orange County Health Care Agency www.ochealthinfo.com

# # #
August 19, 2009

TO: Supervisor Patricia Bates, Fifth District, Chair
Supervisor Janet Nguyen, First District, Vice-Chair
Supervisor John M. W. Moorlach, Second District
Supervisor Bill Campbell, Third District
Supervisor Chris Norby, Fourth District

SUBJECT: Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza - Update 17

The Health Care Agency continues to be actively involved in novel H1N1 influenza surveillance and response activities in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). The following information is provided regarding current disease status and planning efforts.

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza Status

Novel H1N1 influenza infections continue to create higher levels of influenza-like illness than is normal for this time of year. CDC estimates that between April and June 2009, more than one million cases of pandemic novel H1N1 influenza occurred in the United States. As of August 13, 2009, 7,511 total novel H1N1 influenza hospitalizations and 477 total deaths have been reported to the CDC by state and local public health departments. In California, 1,057 hospitalizations and 104 novel H1N1-associated deaths have been reported; Orange County has reported 193 hospitalizations and 16 novel H1N1-associated deaths.

Illness associated with the novel H1N1 virus continues to look similar to seasonal influenza with the highest risk of complications being among those with other medical conditions and pregnant women. CDC anticipates that the novel H1N1 virus will co-circulate with regular seasonal influenza viruses during the coming influenza season.

Novel H1N1 Vaccination Planning

The federal government plans to have 280 million doses of novel H1N1 vaccine available this flu season, with the first 40 million doses available in mid-October. The vaccine is in clinical trials now to assure its safety and its efficacy against the novel H1N1 virus; it is thought at this time that two doses will be needed to confer immunity to the virus. Vaccination will be voluntary and provided at no cost, though the private sector is not prohibited from charging an administration fee.
The CDC has recommended that initial vaccination efforts for novel H1N1 focus on five key populations: pregnant women; people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age; healthcare and emergency services personnel; all people 6 months through 24 years of age; and people 25 through 64 years of age with underlying health conditions which put them at risk for influenza complications. If vaccine becomes available in limited quantities, CDC has provided additional guidance for further prioritizing within the target populations.

States will be responsible for distribution of the federal novel H1N1 vaccine supply. State planning calls for private and public community providers to obtain vaccine directly from the State. The Health Care Agency is working with the CDPH and local partners, including hospitals, clinics and schools, to develop local distribution plans that assure timely access to vaccine for all priority populations.

**Funding**
Federal funding will be allocated through the State to local health departments to support three areas of novel H1NI influenza response activities: vaccine distribution/administration and antiviral management; epidemiology and laboratory support; and hospital surge preparedness planning. Orange County has already been notified that it will receive a total of $1,750,269 for these activities. California will receive an additional $15,804,211 to further support vaccine planning; it is anticipated that 70% of those funds will be distributed to local health departments.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact me at (714) 834-6021.

David L. Riley, Director

cc: Thomas G. Mauk, County Executive Officer
    Stephen Dunivent, Deputy CEO
High Temperatures Bring Risk of Heat-Related Illnesses

(Santa Ana) – The National Weather Service is predicting near record high temperatures for some areas of Orange County over the next several days and area residents are urged to take precautions to prevent heat related illnesses.

“The current forecast calls for hotter than average high temperatures extending through the weekend,” said Dr. Eric Handler, County Health Officer. “Everyone should take precautions to stay cool and drink plenty of water and other non-alcoholic fluids to prevent serious heat related illnesses. Be sure to call and check on your family members and neighbors. Additional precautions are especially needed for older adults, those with preexisting medical conditions like heart or lung disease, those with disabilities, children, and those who may be working outdoors. Remember that your pets need extra water and shade, too.”

Prolonged exposure to excessive temperatures may cause serious conditions like heat exhaustion or heat stroke and can even be fatal. Symptoms of heat exhaustion may include heavy sweating, muscle cramps, weakness, headache, nausea or vomiting and dizziness. Warning signs of heat stroke may include an extremely high body temperature, unconsciousness, confusion, hot and dry skin (no sweating), a rapid, strong pulse, and a throbbing headache. If symptoms of heat stroke occur, immediately call for medical assistance. Move the person to a shady area and begin cooling their body with water.

Recommended precautions to prevent heat related illnesses include:

- **Staying cool indoors.** Use your air conditioner to cool your home. If you don’t have air conditioning, visit public facilities such as shopping malls, community centers or libraries to stay cool. Do not rely on electric fans as your primary cooling device during a heat wave. When the temperature is in the high 90’s or higher, a fan will not prevent heat-related illness. A cool shower or bath is a more effective way to cool off.

- **Drinking more fluids, especially water.** Don’t wait until you are thirsty.

- **Checking often on those at high-risk.** This includes older adults, those with chronic medical conditions, people with disabilities, those who take certain medications and children. Make sure their air conditioner is turned on, or offer to take them to a cooler place.
If you have to be outside in the heat, follow these recommendations:

- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing and a hat to provide shade from the sun. Use sunscreen.
- Avoid over-exertion and schedule outdoor activities for the cooler part of the day. Spend as much time as possible in the shade.
- Never leave a person or pet unattended in a closed car or other vehicle.

For more information on heat related illnesses, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).
For Immediate Release
Sept. 22, 2009

Contact: Tricia Landquist
(714) 834-2178

Orange County Joins Unique National Effort to Prevent Substance Abuse Among Children and Teens

(Santa Ana) – The Prevention Coalitions of Orange County (PCOC) and the Orange County Health Care Agency are joining forces with the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University in an annual celebration of Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children™ on Sept. 28 as part of the continuing effort to prevent substance abuse among children and teens.

Launched in 2001, Family Day is a movement that encourages parents to frequently eat dinner with their kids and be involved in their children’s lives. It is also a day that helps to remind busy families of the invaluable role that parental involvement plays in steering children and teens away from cigarettes, drugs and alcohol. Research conducted by CASA consistently shows that the more often children eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs.

“We hope that families will embrace Family Day and will continue having regular family dinners throughout the year,” said David Souleles, Public Health Services Deputy Agency Director for the Health Care Agency. “The conversations we have with our children over the dinner table open lines of communication that truly can make a difference in their lives and help them make healthier choices along the way.”

According to the CASA report entitled The Importance of Family Dinners III, compared to kids who have fewer than three family dinners per week, children and teens who have frequent family dinners (five or more per week) are at 70 percent lower risk for substance abuse, are half as likely to try cigarettes or marijuana, are one third less likely to try alcohol, and are 40 percent likelier to say future drug use will never happen.

The Prevention Coalitions of Orange County (PCOC) consists of several local organizations and agencies that share in the mission to strengthen Orange County’s capacity to provide coordinated alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention services and resources that promote safe neighborhoods and healthy lifestyles. PCOC believes that celebrating Family Day is an important first step in helping to achieve a substance abuse free life for America’s children and teens.

For more information on local Family Day activities, contact Pauline Stauder, Program Supervisor for the Orange County Health Care Agency Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT), at (714) 834-2094, or for more information on the national observance of Family Day, visit www.CASAFamilyDay.org.

# # #
Restaurant Inspection Seals Enhanced

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency will begin posting new and enhanced inspection seals at more than 15,000 retail food facilities in Orange County. The new Inspection Notification Seals can be found at the entrance to retail food facilities throughout the county.

The enhanced inspection seals will include bolder and more distinct wording indicating “Passed,” “Reinspection Due – Pass,” or “Closed.” In addition to providing an “at-a-glance” status of the food facility, each seal offers information about the facility including name, address, date of the last inspection, and a 24-hour telephone hotline number where consumers can contact Environmental Health.

Additional detailed inspection information remains available through the Food Protection Program website at www.ocfoodinfo.com, where copies of the actual inspection report are posted for viewing, or by request at the retail facility. Orange County also conducts the Award of Excellence program which recognizes food facilities that consistently demonstrate the highest standards in food safety and sanitation.

Orange County Environmental Health, a Division of the Health Care Agency’s Public Health Services, conducts regular inspections at a variety of food facilities, including restaurants, grocery stores and wholesale establishments that manufacture or distribute food products. The goal of the Food Protection Program is to ensure that the food sold and served in Orange County is safe, wholesome, properly labeled and advertised, and produced under sanitary conditions.

# # #
Partnership for Drug-Free America Launches New Alliance with the Orange County Health Care Agency

(Santa Ana) – A new alliance between the County of Orange Health Care Agency’s (HCA) Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team (ADEPT) and the Partnership for a Drug-Free America will allow the ADEPT program and various alcohol and other drug community partners to work directly with local media to disseminate the Partnership’s messages focused on reducing illicit drug and alcohol use among children and teens in the communities of Orange County. The campaign aims to provide families with the tools, information and support they need to help their children lead healthy, drug-free lives.

“It is the Health Care Agency’s hope that exposure to the Partnership’s educational messages, coupled with the existing work of the Agency, its contract providers and other community based agencies will result in improvements in attitudes and behaviors of young people around substance abuse issues,” said David Souleles, Public Health Services Deputy Agency Director for the Health Care Agency.

The new alliance entitled “Partnership for a Drug-Free Orange County,” encourages parents to have regular conversations with their children regarding the dangers of alcohol and other drug use. Research consistently shows that teens who learn a lot about the risks of drugs at home are up to 50 percent less likely to use than those who do not get that crucial message at home. Yet many parents have difficulty talking with their kids about drugs and alcohol and the campaign strives to equip parents with the tools they need to begin and keep the dialogue open around substance abuse.

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America is a non-profit organization that unites parents, renowned scientists and communications professionals to help families raise healthy children. The Partnership is best known for its research-based national public education programs, and its initiative to motivate parents in preventing their children from using drugs and alcohol, and to find help and treatment for family and friends in trouble.

For more information on this initiative, please contact Amy Buch, Division Manager for the Orange Health Care Agency’s Health Promotion Division, at (714) 834-5728, or for more information on the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, visit www.drugfree.org.
For immediate release: Contact: Deanne Thompson
October 14, 2009 (714) 834-2178

United We Can: Stop HIV and Prevent AIDS
October 15 is National Latino AIDS Awareness Day

(Santa Ana) – The Orange County Health Care Agency announces that October 15, 2009 is the seventh annual observance of National Latino AIDS Awareness Day. National Latino AIDS Awareness Day occurs during Hispanic Heritage Month, and is a day of hope for a future without AIDS, “United We Can: Stop HIV and Prevent AIDS” is the campaign’s theme.

In 2005, HIV/AIDS was the fourth leading cause of death in the U.S. for Latino men and women ages 35-44 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2008). Latinos also account for a higher proportion of AIDS cases than their representation in the general population (The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2008). In 2008, for example, Latinos composed approximately 33% of the Orange County population; however, they accounted for 52% of the diagnosed AIDS cases and 42% of the newly diagnosed HIV cases in the County. As Latinos are the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the U.S., preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in this community through prevention education and testing becomes central to improving the nation’s health.

Since HIV testing is a critical step in identifying HIV infections and reducing high risk behaviors and transmission it is recommended that everyone, and especially Latinos, get tested for HIV in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 through October 15) and National Latino AIDS Awareness Day (October 15). In Orange County, the following agencies are offering confidential and anonymous free or low-cost testing:

- **Orange County Health Care Agency:** 17th Street Clinic, (714) 834-8787: walk-ins only - Mon., Wed., and Thurs. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Tue. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Fri. 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **The Center Orange County:** (714) 953-5428: call for times and locations
- **AIDS Services Foundation:** (949) 809-8775: walk-ins only - Tue., Wed., and Thurs. 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- **Laguna Beach Community Clinic:** Tue., Wed., Thurs., and Sat. - call for hours, (949) 494-0761 (there is a charge for services, call for details).
- For more testing sites and information call (800) 367-2437 or go online: [www.AIDShotline.org](http://www.AIDShotline.org)

Make a difference today! Get tested for HIV and tell a friend to get tested for HIV. For more information on HIV services in Orange County, contact the Health Care Agency at (714) 834-8711. United We Can: Stop HIV and Prevent AIDS!

# # #
Para su publicación inmediata:       Contacto: Deanne Thompson
14 de octubre del 2009            (714) 834-2178

Unidos podemos: Detener al VIH y Prevenir el SIDA
El 15 de octubre es el Día Nacional Latino para la Concientización sobre el SIDA

(Santa Ana) – La Agencia de Salud del Condado de Orange anuncia que el 15 de octubre del 2009 es la séptima observación anual del Día Nacional Latino para la Concientización sobre el SIDA. El Día Nacional Latino para la Concientización sobre el SIDA ocurre durante el Mes de la Herencia Hispana y es un día de esperanza para un futuro sin SIDA, “Unidos podemos: Detener al VIH y Prevenir el SIDA” es el tema de la campaña.

En el 2005, el VIH/SIDA fue la cuarta causa principal de muerte en los Estados Unidos para las mujeres y hombres Latinos entre los 35 y 40 años de edad (Centros para el Control de Enfermedades, 2008). Los Latinos también conforman una proporción más alta de casos de SIDA que su porcentaje en la población en general (The Henry Kaiser Family Foundation, 2008). En el 2008, por ejemplo, los Latinos representaron el 33% de la población del condado de Orange; sin embargo, tuvieron el 52% de los casos diagnosticados de SIDA y el 42% de los nuevos casos diagnosticados de VIH en el condado. Debido a que los Latinos son el grupo étnico minoritario más grande y de más rápido crecimiento en los Estados Unidos, el prevenir la propagación del VIH/SIDA en esta comunidad a través de educación preventiva y pruebas para detectar el virus es vital para mejorar el nivel nacional de la salud.

Debido a que la prueba del VIH es un paso crítico en identificar las infecciones con VIH y reducir los comportamientos de alto riesgo y la transmisión del virus, se alienta a los Latinos a hacerse la prueba para detectar el VIH en celebración del Mes de la Herencia Hispana (15 de septiembre al 15 de octubre) y el Día Nacional Latino para la Concientización sobre el SIDA (15 de octubre). En el condado de Orange, las siguientes agencias ofrecen pruebas para detectar el VIH confidenciales ó anónimas gratis ó a bajo costo:

- **Orange County Health Care Agency**: Clínica de la Calle 17, (714) 834-8787: no se requieren citas - lunes., miércoles, y jueves de 8 a.m. a 4 p.m.; martes de 10 a.m. a 5 p.m.; y viernes de 9:30 a.m. a 4 p.m.
- **The Center Orange County**: (714) 953-5428: llame para obtener la dirección y el horario de servicios médicos
- **AIDS Services Foundation**: (949) 809-8775: no se requieren citas - martes, miércoles, y jueves de 2 p.m. a 6 p.m.
- **Laguna Beach Community Clinic**: martes, miércoles, jueves y sábado – llamar al (949) 494-0761 para el horario de atención (se cobra una tarifa por el servicio, llame para más información).

Para más lugares que ofrecen la prueba e información, llame al (800) 367-2437 ó visite el sitio de Internet: [www.AIDShotline.org](http://www.AIDShotline.org)

¡Haga la diferencia hoy mismo! Hágase la prueba del VIH y digale a un amigo que se la haga. Para más información sobre los servicios del VIH en el condado de Orange, llame a la Agencia de Salud del Condado al (714) 834-8711. ¡Unidos podemos: Detener al VIH y Prevenir el SIDA!
2009 H1N1 Vaccine Available to all Orange County Residents

(Santa Ana) – Effective immediately, the Health Care Agency (HCA) is lifting the initial restriction on the use of H1N1 vaccine for target groups, and is recommending that local providers expand their vaccine availability to all individuals who are interested in being vaccinated.

Orange County residents are encouraged to contact their medical provider for H1N1 vaccine. If H1N1 vaccine is not available through their provider, residents may schedule an appointment at the HCA 17th Street clinic in Santa Ana by calling the Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448. A number of community clinics are also offering H1N1 vaccine to the public. A list of community clinics offering H1N1 vaccinations can be found on the Health Care Agency’s web site, www.ochealthinfo.com.

Vaccine availability has increased significantly in the last few weeks. Close to 714,000 doses of H1N1 influenza vaccine have been shipped, or are in the process of being shipped, to Orange County providers. A further 144,000 doses are expected by early January, and an additional 10 million doses are anticipated to be distributed throughout the state by February.

H1N1 activity is expected to continue throughout the influenza season and HCA recommends that all individuals, especially those on the CDC target list, get vaccinated as another wave of H1N1 cases could occur later this season. It is important to remember that children aged 6 months-9 years need two doses of H1N1 influenza vaccine at least 28 days apart. The second dose of H1N1 vaccine is available at the HCA 17th Street clinic, for residents that do not have access to H1N1 vaccine through their medical providers.

The most current local information about H1N1 vaccine availability can be found at www.flu.gov or on the HCA web site at www.ochealthinfo.com.

# # #
For immediate release: Contact: Nicole Stanfield
December 15, 2009 (714) 834-2178

Orange County Juvenile Health Services Receives State Accreditation

(SANTA ANA) – The Orange County Health Care Agency’s Juvenile Health Services (JHS) recently received a two-year Accreditation for three (3) of its juvenile facilities. The three facilities in Orange County are among 15 accredited facilities in the state of California.

Accreditation status indicates that JHS has met standards set by the California Medical Services Association Institute for Medical Quality (IMQ), in addition to those set by State law, that are focused on improving medical care and health services in the juvenile setting.

“The Health Care Agency believes that providing quality health care for minors housed within the Probation Institutions is of high priority, and is proud of staff efforts toward achieving this accomplishment,” said Terre Duensing, Division Manager for the Health Care Agency’s Institutional Health Services Division. “This achievement is the result of months of planning and collaboration between the Health Care Agency and Probation Department.”

Juvenile Health Services (JHS) provides medical, dental, nursing, and pharmaceutical services at a community standard of care for children housed at Juvenile Hall, Youth Leadership Academy, Joplin Center and the Youth Guidance Center facilities operated by the Probation Department and contracts with hospitals for inpatient and specialty care. For more information, visit HCA’s Medical and Institutional Health Services webpage at www.ochealthinfo.com/medical/about.htm.

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Free SEASONAL Influenza Vaccine now Available to Orange County Residents

(Santa Ana) – The Health Care Agency (HCA) is offering a walk-in clinic that will provide free seasonal influenza vaccinations to individuals at highest risk for complications of influenza.

The walk-in clinic is located at 1725 W. 17th Street, Santa Ana and is open Monday through Saturday, 9:00am-4:00pm. The clinic is closed for lunch from 11:45am-12:45pm and there is no clinic on Sundays. Vaccination clinics will not be offered December 24th, 25th, or 26th. The seasonal flu vaccine is not effective against the H1N1 influenza virus and people with severe egg allergies should not receive the vaccination.

Persons eligible for a free seasonal influenza vaccination include people 50 years and older; adults with chronic medical conditions; pregnant women or women that plan to get pregnant this influenza season; people living with or caring for persons at high risk for complications from influenza; and all children 2 through 18 years of age, especially those with chronic medical conditions.

Influenza is a serious disease that can affect people of any age and an annual seasonal flu vaccination is the best way to protect against becoming ill. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in an average year seasonal influenza causes 36,000 flu-related deaths in the United States. The "seasonal flu season" in the United States is usually from November through April each year.

The most current local information is available on the HCA web site, www.ochealthinfo.com, or by calling the Health Referral Line at (800) 564-8448.