



Tom Barrett  
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE  
Commissioner of Health

Sandra J. Rotar  
Health Operations Administrator

**Health Department**

[www.milwaukee.gov/health](http://www.milwaukee.gov/health)

Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 North Broadway, 3rd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202-3653 phone (414) 286-3521 fax (414) 286-5990

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 7, 2017

Contact: Sarah DeRoo  
Office (414) 286-3548  
Cell (414) 708-4060

**City of Milwaukee Health Department Confirms Influenza-Associated Pediatric Death**

*Health officials continue to urge vaccination and prevention steps to reduce spread of seasonal virus*

MILWAUKEE – The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) has confirmed the influenza-associated death of a child residing in Milwaukee. The death is the first pediatric flu death reported to the MHD for the 2016-2017 flu season. Nationwide, more than 40 pediatric flu deaths have been reported for the current season according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“We are deeply saddened to learn that a child has died of complications related to the seasonal flu, and our thoughts remain with the child’s family,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker.

In the city of Milwaukee, 278 influenza-related hospitalizations have been reported for the 2016-2017 flu season. The majority of hospitalizations have been in individuals age 50 and older.

“Flu can be a serious illness,” added Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. “We urge all area residents to take steps to prevent the spread of flu in our community. Remember, even if you think you can beat the flu, you may spread it to others who are more vulnerable.”

Influenza (the flu) is among the most common respiratory illnesses in the United States, infecting millions of people and resulting in flu-related complications and deaths in tens of thousands of individuals each year. The most vulnerable populations include infants and young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with certain medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, and chronic lung disease.

To protect yourself and those around you, health officials recommend taking steps to:

**Protect yourself:** Get vaccinated and take antiviral medications as prescribed by your doctor. Flu vaccine is recommended for all individuals over 6 months of age, and can help prevent the flu or reduce the severity of symptoms if you do get sick. Antiviral medications can reduce the severity and duration of illness in individuals at risk for complications associated with the flu.

**Prevent the spread:** Cover your coughs and sneezes with your elbow, and wash your hands frequently. The flu virus is spread through the air when someone who is sick coughs, sneezes, or speaks. Washing your hands frequently with soap and water, or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers, can help prevent the spread.

**Play it safe:** Stay home if you are sick. If experiencing symptoms of seasonal flu, such as fever, cough, sore throat, stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, and fatigue, stay home from work or school, get rest, and drink plenty of fluids. If you are at-risk for complications or your symptoms persist or worsen, contact your health care provider.

Flu vaccine remains available through local health care providers and retail pharmacies. Individuals looking for a location to receive the vaccine near their home can use the flu vaccine finder at [Milwaukee.gov/health](http://Milwaukee.gov/health).

###

*Think Health. Act Now!*

