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Contacts:

[Tim Church](#), Communications Office 360-236-4077

[Donn Moyer](#), Communications Office 360-236-4076

Snohomish County pneumonia death — man positive for swine flu (H1N1)

Patient with heart problems is state's first swine flu-related death

OLYMPIA — A Snohomish County man in his 30s with underlying heart conditions died last week with what appears to be complications of swine-origin influenza (H1N1). This is the first death in Washington associated with the new flu strain.

"This death is tragic. Our thoughts are with all those affected by this man's passing," said Governor Chris Gregoire. "It's a sobering reminder that influenza is serious, and can be fatal. I know our public health agencies are doing everything they can to track and monitor this outbreak and to protect the people of our state."

While this marks the first death in this state related to swine flu, the case counts are expected to continue rising for some time to come.

"We're working with local and federal partners to track this outbreak," said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky, "and while most illnesses from this new flu strain have been fairly mild, we must remember that influenza claims about 36,000 lives every year nationwide. That's why we urge people to take this outbreak, and the seasonal flu we see every year, very seriously."

The new H1N1 strain of swine flu has been similar to seasonal flu in symptoms, spread, and response to treatment. Typically, people with existing health conditions are at greater risk of serious health effects from influenza.

Flu symptoms often include fever, muscle aches, cough, and sometimes trouble breathing. It's

important for people who are sick with flu-like symptoms to stay home or go to a health care provider if they become seriously ill. The best thing people in our state can do is to pay attention to their own health. If children are sick, keep them out of school or day care until they're well.

Detailed information about this outbreak is available on the Department of Health [swine flu update Web site](http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/default.htm) (www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/default.htm). The count of probable and confirmed cases in our state is updated daily at about 3:00 p.m. The agency's swine flu information telephone line, 1-888-703-4364, provides prevention advice in English and Spanish. The [federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/index.htm) (www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/index.htm) has the latest information on the national disease investigation.

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