

Countywide Services Agency

Department of
Health and Human Services

Division of Public Health

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For Immediate Release

Sacramento County Public Health Reaches 500th Twitter Follower Milestone!

(Sacramento, CA) – Sacramento County Public Health is all a-twitter about the communications milestone it hit this week with the signup of its 500th Twitter follower. Twitter is the popular free social networking site that allows users, such as SacPublicHealth, to send short 140 character text messages to Twitter “followers” who want to receive the messages.

“Sacramento County Public Health has been recognized nationally for its use of innovative technologies to distribute important public health messages, and Twitter is one of the newest tools in our outreach arsenal,” said Glennah Trochet, M.D., Sacramento County Public Health Officer.

Public Health’s legion of Twitter followers has grown quickly ever since the H1N1 Swine Flu broke out in April. “We have used Twitter to notify the public and media about news releases, news conferences, new flu prevention guidance, and other developing health news,” said Kerry Shearer, Communications & Media Officer for Sacramento County Public Health. “We know that many of the messages we have sent out have been ‘re-tweeted’ (re-sent) to others, so it’s clear that Twitter allows us to potentially reach thousands of people very quickly with critical public health news,” Shearer said.

Sacramento County Public Health was an early adopter of new media techniques. The agency has a YouTube channel stocked with videos, a number of which were produced in-house at its own web video studio. Shearer stated: “Our high-tech-looking ‘set’ is actually a combination of castoff fixtures from a defunct home store and second-hand building materials, but it looks terrific and also serves as an interview location when local TV stations come to interview the Health Officer”.

The agency has also used www.uStream.tv to do live news conference streaming and to make live presentations to national conferences and meetings. “We’ve discovered that a number of public agencies across the country have turned to us to ask what it takes to get started using new media. It has been extremely rewarding to explain what we do, provide encouragement to try out these techniques, and then later hear about all the positive results,” Shearer said.

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“We’re working hard at Public Health to do more with fewer resources, and being more efficient in our communications approaches is one part of that effort,” explained Dr. Trochet. “We invite everyone to visit www.Twitter.com/SacPublicHealth and stay informed about H1N1 swine flu and other important health issues affecting us in the Sacramento region.”

Sacramento County Public Health “New Media” Resources Include:

Web site: www.SCPH.com

Twitter page: www.Twitter.com/SacPublicHealth

YouTube Channel: www.YouTube.com/SacCountyPH

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