

For Immediate Release:

May 1, 2009

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Hotline open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

New Information

MAY 1, 2009 3:00 p.m.

Florida now has two CDC laboratory confirmed cases of Swine Flu in Florida.

- Lee County: 11-year-old male who attends Spring Creek Elementary School.
- Broward County: 17-year-old female who attends Hallandale High School.

Decisions regarding school closures will be made by local superintendents.

Governor Charlie Crist has directed State Surgeon General Dr. Ana Viamonte Ros to declare a public health emergency that will allow the State Surgeon General to take any action necessary to protect the public health (Florida Statutes, 381.00315).

There are currently no school closures in the state of Florida. States with school closures include: AL, CA, CT, IL, MN, NY, OH, SC, TX,

and WA. An estimated 298 schools within these states are closed due to confirmed and probably cases of H1N1. The closures impact 172,264 students and 10,877 teachers. An additional 30 schools in three states (CT, NY and TX) closed for precautionary measures only.

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

Current Situation

Samples are being received by Florida Department of Health Laboratories for analysis from physicians and hospitals across the state.

The Department of Health continues enhanced surveillance and outreach to physicians, hospitals and other health care professionals. The surveillance system, consisting of sentinel physicians reporting influenza activity, DOH laboratories receiving specimens from physicians and hospitals and our ability to monitor emergency room cases and over-the-counter drug sales is fully operational. We have activated our response plan and are ready to respond to any cases of swine flu if it should occur.

Department of Health continues its enhanced surveillance with a network of Sentinel Physician Providers. These providers send selected samples of laboratory specimens to state laboratories for testing if they have patients with influenza like illness (ILI). These physicians also continue to report weekly ILI cases to the Department of Health.

Anti-virals have been pre-positioned to areas of potential need. We have one half million individual courses.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported 109 confirmed cases of novel influenza in the United States, with one death in a twenty-three month old.

The World Health Organization (WHO) alert level remains at Phase 5. The declaration of a Phase 5 is a strong signal that the pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalize the organization, communication, and implementation of the planned mitigation measures is short.

Participation in Centers for Disease Control and other national conference calls will continue.

Precautions

The State Surgeon General provided these recommendations:

People with respiratory illness should stay home from work or school to avoid spreading infections, including influenza, to others in the community.

- Avoid close contact with people who are coughing or otherwise appear ill.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash hands frequently to lessen the spread of respiratory illness.

People experiencing cough, fever and fatigue, possibly along with diarrhea and vomiting, should contact their physician.

If you think you have influenza, please call your health care provider and discuss whether you need to be seen in their office, emergency department or stay home.