

For Immediate Release:
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www.doh.state.fl.us

New Information

June 16, 2009 9:45 a.m.

Current Situation

Today the Florida Department of Health confirmed the death of a 9-year-old male in Miami Dade from H1N1 Swine Flu. This is Florida's first laboratory confirmed H1N1 Swine Flu death.

"Our hearts and prayers go out to the family and friends of this child," said Surgeon General Dr. Ana Viamonte Ros. " While most cases of H1N1 swine flu are mild, there are exceptions like this tragic case. Nationally, the CDC is reporting 45 deaths associated with Swine Flu, and as the flu progresses that number will unfortunately rise. All of us should continue to be alert and stay home if sick, cover your cough and sneeze, and wash hands frequently:"

All four Department of Health laboratories have received testing supplies from the Center for Diseases Control and can test samples to confirm H1N1 Swine Flu. This testing capability allows the Department to expedite results as we no longer need to send probable cases to CDC laboratories.

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 if needed.

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.

Florida currently has 417 confirmed cases of H1N1 Swine Flu. The World Health Organization (WHO) alert level is at Phase 6 "pandemic." The pandemic (WHO level 6) status is based on geographic distribution and not the severity of swine flu. In effect the WHO is saying that swine flu H1N1 is now circulating world-wide.

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.

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