

To: School Administrators
School Nurses

From: Maichle Bacon, Public Health Administrator
Dee Dunnett, Director-Center for Health Protection and Promotion

Date: 27 April 2009

RE: **Swine Influenza A (H1N1)**

In an effort to closely monitor the health of our community, we are requesting your help and the help of your school nurses. Surveillance is the key to quick identification of possible health issues related to swine influenza. We are asking for you to report any increase in absenteeism due to influenza-like illness (ILI) reports. When taking calls regarding ill students, it is important to obtain a symptom list for those students. Symptoms are defined by CDC and include: fever (usually high 100° F or greater), headache, cough, sore throat, (vomiting and diarrhea in children). Reporting of clusters of illnesses can be done by telephone **[815-720-4050]** or fax **[815-962-5161]**. We have included a short, easy to complete form for your convenience. We appreciate your assistance with the added surveillance through the end of this school year.

By way of review, Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. CDC has determined that this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it not known how easily the virus spreads between people. 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. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions Spread of this swine influenza A (H1N1) virus is thought to be happening in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Prevention steps to take:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends staying home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

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