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H1N1 swine influenza update: May 5, 2009

Special note: Today was the final live daily media briefing regarding H1N1 Swine Flu. As the outbreak continues daily news releases will be sent with updated information and posted at www.flu.oregon.gov.

New developments:

As the H1N1 swine flu virus continues to run at a level equivalent with seasonal flu in Oregon and across the United States, the state Public Health Division has updated the school closure policy. In most instances, closure of schools or child care facilities will not be recommended. However, students who are ill should continue to stay at home and schools should continue to work with their local health departments. This policy is consistent with the recently released guidelines of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Based on the information we've collected and what our colleagues in this county and around the world are seeing, it is appropriate to treat this new strain with the same precautions as a seasonal influenza virus," Dr. Mel Kohn, head of the Oregon Department of Human Services Public Health Division, said today.

Cases:

As of Tuesday afternoon, Oregon public health officials had confirmed 21 cases of H1N1 swine influenza virus in five counties.

(more)

This is the breakdown of cases by county confirmed by the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory:

Lane – 5
Multnomah – 7
Polk – 5
Umatilla – 2
Washington – 2
Total – 21

The Oregon Department of Human Services Public Health Division is aware of one patient currently hospitalized with H1N1 swine influenza, and that patient is recovering.

Of the 21 confirmed cases statewide, there are six children, five teens and 10 adults. There are nine males and 12 females. Of Oregon specimens that have tested positive for some form of influenza A, 30 percent were found to be H1N1 swine influenza. Additional specimens continue to be tested at the state public health laboratory.

Looking ahead:

In addition, Kohn said it is time for the state to begin preparing for a more serious than normal fall flu season.

“This is a new strain of influenza that none of us have immunity to and there is not yet a vaccine,” he said. “That means more people will be calling in sick to work or have to stay home to care for family members. Businesses and organizations should start planning for that now.”

Three flu-related resources available to the public:

- A comprehensive Web site, www.flu.oregon.gov, is updated daily.
- The public may ask questions of public health professionals by calling the hotline: 1-800-978-3040. The hotline is staffed weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Pacific time.
- E-mail questions may be directed to flu.help@state.or.us.

H1N1 swine influenza symptoms are similar to those for seasonal flu and may include fever greater than 100 degrees F. or 37.8 degrees C.; sore throat; cough; stuffy nose; chills; headache or body aches; fatigue; and in some cases diarrhea and vomiting.