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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 28 11:00 a.m. Swine Flu Update

Swine Flu Cases

At this time, NO cases are suspected or confirmed in Santa Barbara County or neighboring counties of Ventura or San Luis Obispo.

According to the Centers for Disease Control as of 8:00 a.m. PST today the total number of confirmed swine flu cases in the California is 10 with additional cases that are considered probable still under investigation. All the confirmed cases in California are from San Diego, Imperial and Sacramento counties.

Outside of California, 54 cases have been confirmed in New York, Kansas, Texas, and Ohio. There are additional probable cases in Michigan, Massachusetts, Indiana, and Texas.

Swine Flu Phone Line

The Swine Flu Phone Line has information on the status of the swine flu outbreak. The public can call 1-888-722-6358 for updated recorded information in both English and Spanish, 24 hours/day.

Swine Flu Prevention

Steps to stop the spread of influenza and other respiratory illnesses:

- Stay home when ill to avoid spreading illness to others
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and properly dispose of used tissues
- Wash your hands thoroughly or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid contact with others that are ill

It is possible that a vaccine will be developed for swine flu but one is not available at this time. The vaccine for regular seasonal flu does not provide protection against swine flu but it does provide protection for the seasonal flu. This is because seasonal flu is caused by a different virus than the virus that causes swine flu.

Swine Flu Treatment

Swine flu can be treated with anti-viral drugs so getting medical care early is important. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in the body. For people who are sick with swine flu, antiviral drugs can make their illness milder and make them feel better faster and may prevent serious flu complications. For treatment, antiviral drugs work best if started soon after getting sick (within 2 days of symptoms).

Testing for Swine Flu

Testing for swine flu is being focused on patients who meet the following criteria:

- Patients who have been hospitalized due to influenza-like illness
- Non-hospitalized patients with influenza-like illness who:

- Had close contact with a person confirmed to have swine flu
- Lives in a high-risk setting for transmission (e.g., school, prison)
- Is part of a cluster of people with influenza-like illness (only one patient needs laboratory confirmation)
- Returned from Mexico within 7 days of illness onset or cared for ill household members with this travel history

School Information

All schools in Santa Barbara County are open.

Schools are advised to send students who are sick home. If a student has flu-like symptoms and has travelled to any of the areas affected by swine flu, they need to be seen by a physician, be tested for swine flu and treated if appropriate. If swine flu is suspected, public health officials will work with school officials on recommended actions.

Pandemic Alert Status

A pandemic is a global outbreak of the influenza (flu). The World Health Organization has raised the level of influenza pandemic alert from the current phase 3 to phase 4. The change to a higher phase of pandemic alert indicates that the likelihood of a pandemic has increased, but not that a pandemic is inevitable. As further information becomes available, WHO may decide to either revert to phase 3 or raise the level of alert to another phase. This decision was based primarily on epidemiological data demonstrating human-to-human transmission and the ability of the virus to cause community-level outbreaks.

Travel Recommendations

At this time, CDC recommends that U.S. travelers avoid all non-essential travel to Mexico. Changes to this recommendation will be posted at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>. The World Health Organization has recommended **not** to close borders and not to restrict international travel at this time. It is considered prudent for people who are ill to delay international travel and for people developing symptoms following international travel to seek medical attention.

For Additional Information

For more information on swine flu and flu prevention tips, go to Public Health Department website at www.sbcphd.org or www.cdph.ca.gov.

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