

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LOCAL AND STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS ON ALERT FOR H1N1
INFLUENZA VIRUS (SWINE FLU)**

Dickinson and Iron Counties, Michigan – April 30, 2009. Linda Piper, Health Officer, stated today that local health departments are working closely with the Michigan Department of Community Health and local health care providers to monitor an outbreak of the H1N1 influenza virus (Swine Flu). As of today, there are two confirmed cases in Michigan. Currently, there are NO confirmed cases in Dickinson or Iron Counties.

People who have recently visited areas that have confirmed cases of the H1N1 influenza virus (Swine Flu) and are experiencing influenza-like symptoms, or have been in contact with sick persons from these areas, should contact their health care provider immediately. If you intend to see your medical provider, request a mask immediately upon entering the clinic or hospital.

Symptoms of influenza include:

- Fever greater than 100 degrees
- Body aches
- Coughing
- Sore throat
- Respiratory congestion
- In some cases diarrhea and vomiting

The Michigan Department of Community Health routinely conducts influenza surveillance statewide and as a precautionary measure has requested that local health agencies, clinics and hospitals increase the level of monitoring for influenza. The most important things you can do to prevent the spread of influenza is:

- 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.
- Try to avoid close contacts with sick people.
- If you get sick, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you stay home from work or school or daycare and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth to reduce the spread of germs.

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What can you expect if the H1N1 influenza virus (Swine Flu) is identified in the area?

If there is a case of the H1N1 influenza virus (Swine Flu) diagnosed in the area, residents should be prepared for social distancing interventions that may be quickly implemented. School dismissals may be considered in schools with a confirmed case of the H1N1 influenza virus (Swine Flu). Decisions regarding broader school closures, closure of childcare facilities and cancellation of any large public gatherings will be made based on the severity and spread of the illness. Persons with underlying medical conditions who are at high risk of complications of influenza may want to avoid any large gatherings.

Other recommendations:

People may wish to have over-the-counter medications, particularly non-Aspirin products (Acetaminophen and Ibuprofen) to treat flu symptoms on hand and purchase a few extra groceries and other necessities. This will allow people to avoid trips to the store at the peak of an outbreak, should one occur locally.

This is a time for preparedness; not panic:

Again, there have not been any confirmed cases of the H1N1 influenza virus (Swine Flu) in Dickinson or Iron Counties to date. More importantly, most individuals in the U.S. who have had the H1N1 influenza virus (Swine Flu) have recovered.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture Director Don Koivisto is reminding citizens that the H1N1 influenza virus (Swine Flu) is not currently affecting animal health and is not a food safety issue. "I want to reassure residents that the Influenza A (H1N1) viruses are not transmitted by food so you cannot get the virus from eating pork or pork products. Please continue to properly handle pork or pork products, and cook pork to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F, which kills any potential viruses," stated Koivisto.

For more information, call the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at 906-774-1868 or 906-265-9913 or visit these websites:

www.didhd.org

www.cdc.gov/swineflu

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