

Hamilton County Public Health has been very busy monitoring the H1N1 flu (commonly referred to as Swine Flu) situation. Influenza is always serious and this outbreak certainly poses the potential to be at least as serious as seasonal flu if not more so. It's too soon to predict what will happen or how the virus might change. We are working hard in order to control the spread of this disease in our community.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have confirmed 403 cases of H1N1 flu in the United States and there are currently five confirmed cases in Ohio. At this time, there are no confirmed cases in Hamilton County. Please know these numbers are changing quickly and you may hear the terms confirmed, probable and suspect cases sometimes used interchangeably. Confirmed, probable and suspected each mean something different in regard to cases of H1N1 flu.

A **confirmed case** is a person with an acute febrile respiratory illness with lab confirmed H1N1 flu infection at CDC by one or more of the following tests:

1. real-time RT-PCR
2. viral culture

A **probable case** of H1N1 infection is defined as a person with an acute febrile respiratory illness who is positive for influenza A, but negative for H1 and H3 by influenza RT-PCR.

A **suspected case** of H1N1 infection is defined as a person with acute febrile respiratory illness with onset

- within 7 days of close contact with a person who is a confirmed case of flu infection, or
- within 7 days of travel to community either within the United States or internationally where there are one or more confirmed cases of flu infection, or
- resides in a community where there are one or more confirmed cases of flu infection.

Surveillance –

Our epidemiologist and infection control staff continue to closely monitoring diseases, over-the-counter drugs and emergency room complaints for signs of an increase in flu activities.

Our disease prevention staff have been fielding calls from physicians, school nurses, other agencies and the public regarding H1N1 flu.

Prevention and Education –

- The Southwest Ohio Public Health Region opened a pre-recorded H1N1 flu information line at 513-357-7499.
- We have responded to 19 media inquiries and appeared as a guest on two live local news broadcasts.

- Two public health advisories have been sent to physicians and hospitals regarding testing recommendations.
- We issued guidance to superintendents in order to keep H1N1 from being introduced to their schools.
- We sent educational information to businesses, daycares and faith-based communities.
- Hamilton County Public Health, along with Hamilton County EMA, facilitated guidance for local fire and police departments regarding precautionary measures for first responders.
- “Cover your Cough” posters are still available – in English and Spanish – for your use. To order these, please call 513-946-7889 or e-mail carter.pittman@hamilton-co.org.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and any guidance issued should be considered interim.

Anti-Viral Medications and Masks –

We continue to anticipate receiving anti-viral medications and other basic medical equipment for use if the situation progresses.

CDC is taking early steps in the vaccine manufacturing process, working closely with manufacturing and the rest of the government on a potential H1N1 flu vaccine. They have advised that if things go well, it will be several months until the vaccine will be available.

Attached are some talking points which you might find helpful when answering questions from your residents. I encourage you to visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu for the latest guidance. If you have questions, please contact me by e-mail or phone at 513-946-7822.