



Media Release

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For Immediate Release

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LOCAL DUBUQUE COUNTY H1N1 (SWINE) INFLUENZA RESPONSE

Dubuque County public health, health care, and community preparedness personnel gathered today to discuss the local response for H1N1 Influenza if it should occur in the community. Communications continue to be distributed as guidance is received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). Local emergency rooms and schools will track which individuals are being tested for the new strain. Only those individuals meeting the specific CDC and IDPH criteria will be tested. These criteria include:

- A person with an acute respiratory illness (fever greater than 100°F, plus cough or sore throat, with or without runny nose or nasal congestion) with onset within 7 days of close contact with a person who is a confirmed case of H1N1 Influenza, or
- A person with an acute respiratory illness with onset within 7 days of travel to a community, either within the U.S. or internationally where there are one or more confirmed H1N1 cases.

Those individuals who do not meet these testing criteria, but who have general influenza symptoms, should take the usual precautions recommended for seasonal influenza, which include staying at home and treating the symptoms.

If the IDPH distributes antivirals and personal protection equipment, Dubuque County is prepared to receive these assets and redistribute them to health care providers in the community. Dr. John Viner, MD, Chair of the Dubuque County Board of Health states,

“I expect the majority of individuals infected with the H1N1 (swine) flu (or the regular seasonal influenza) will be able to stay at home and treat their symptoms.”

Spread of this swine influenza is thought to be occurring in the same way that seasonal influenza spreads, from person to person through coughing or sneezing. People may also become infected by touching something with influenza virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Symptoms of swine influenza are similar to seasonal influenza and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. Some people with swine influenza have also reported diarrhea and vomiting in addition to the other symptoms.

To help prevent illness:

- Avoid contact with ill persons.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- After you cough or sneeze, wash your hands with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand gel.
- Practice frequent hand washing.

For more information, the Iowa Department of Public Health has established a hotline at 800-447-1985 (24 hours). Information is also available at www.cdc.gov/swineflu, http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/swine_flu.asp, or cityofdubuque.org

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