



Charlie Crist  
Governor

THE STATE OF FLORIDA  
**State Emergency Response Team**  
[www.FloridaDisaster.org](http://www.FloridaDisaster.org)



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**DAILY TALKING POINTS**  
**Wednesday, April 29, 2009**

**MESSAGE OF THE DAY – TO DATE THERE ARE NO CONFIRMED CASES OF THE SWINE FLU IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA. THE STATE OF FLORIDA CONTINUES TO FOLLOW THE SITUATION AND IS READY TO RESPOND TO SWINE FLU.**

**People with respiratory illness should stay home from work or school to avoid spreading infections, including influenza, to others in the community.**

**Current Threat**

While no confirmed cases have been identified in Florida at this time, cases of swine flu have been confirmed in the U.S., with one confirmed fatality in Texas, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There are an undetermined number of cases in Mexico reaching into the hundreds.

**State Actions**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) pandemic alert is currently at phase 4. Phase 4 is characterized by verified human-to-human transmission of an animal or human - animal virus able to cause community level outbreaks. Phase 4 indicates a significant increase in risk of a pandemic but does not necessarily mean that a pandemic is a forgone conclusion.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported 64 confirmed cases of novel influenza in the United States.
- State reporting systems indicate that there has been an increased number of emergency department visits for influenza like illness in many counties. This data is based on the patient's chief complaint and may not reflect their actual diagnosis.
- DOH labs report that requests for swine flu analysis from County Health Departments (CHDs), hospitals, and private practitioners are increasing as expected. Currently, 65 specimens are being analyzed. No specimens have been sent to CDC.
- The State Emergency Response Team (SERT) remains at a level 3 activation (monitoring). State ESF 8 is monitoring the situation and is coordinating with the Swine Flu Incident Command team.
- Statewide conference calls were held with county emergency management and health department leadership, epidemiologists, county influenza coordinators, laboratory and environmental health staff to give a briefing on the current situation and provide a forum to pose questions to technical specialists.
- Department of Health continues its enhanced surveillance with a network of 100 Sentinel Physician Providers. These local providers send selected samples of laboratory specimens to

state laboratories for testing if they have patients with influenza like illness (ILI). These physicians also continue to report weekly ILI cases to the Department of Health.

- Participation in Centers for Disease Control and other national conference calls continues.

### **Public Actions – from the Florida Department of Health**

- People with respiratory illness should stay home from work or school to avoid spreading infections, including influenza, to others in the community.
- Avoid close contact with people who are coughing or otherwise appear ill.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash hands frequently to lessen the spread of respiratory illness.
- People experiencing cough, fever and fatigue, possibly along with diarrhea and vomiting, should contact their physician.
- If you think you have influenza, please call your health care provider and discuss whether you need to be seen in their office or emergency department or stay home.

### **Other Notes**

**Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food and a person cannot get swine influenza from eating pork products. The infections appear to spread from person to person. Under a doctor's supervision, drugs called antivirals can reduce the consequences of contracting the flu, if taken early.**

### **FAQ: What is Florida doing to protect me from swine flu?**

We have epidemiologist or “disease detectives” at the County Health Departments and in Tallahassee. There is a detailed plan in place to respond to influenza outbreaks. Florida has a strong system to identify potential influenza cases.

- Our state laboratories have the equipment and trained staff to identify influenza samples.
- We have 100 physicians who report flu activity to us on a weekly basis.
- We have access to a database that tracks over the counter drugs to provide us with early warning of potential flu activity.
- We also track 106 emergency departments throughout the state to analyze trends in types of illnesses.

The CDC has created a Webpage with information at [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu)

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All students, teachers and parents can find educational information and free downloadable materials at: [www.KidsGetAPlan.com](http://www.KidsGetAPlan.com).

For the latest daily situation and flash reports go to: [www.YouTube.com/FloridaSERT](http://www.YouTube.com/FloridaSERT)