

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

**DAILY TALKING POINTS**  
**Friday, May 1, 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 OPENS A TOLL FREE NUMBER, 800-342-3557, TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC.**

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 (CDC). There are an undetermined number of cases in Mexico reaching into the hundreds.

**State Actions**

- A toll free information line has been established to address an increasing number of calls from the public requesting swine flu information. The number is 800-342-3557. Hours of staffed operation are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (EDT) daily. After hours calls will be handled by an automated service.
- Statewide conference calls are being held daily with county emergency management and health department officials and health staff to give a briefing on the current situation and provide a forum to pose questions to technical specialists.
- 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.
- The State Emergency Response Team (SERT) is preparing to move to a level 2 activation (partial activation) upon a confirmed Florida case.

- Antiviral medication has been prepositioned to areas of potential need.
- Reports to the State continue to show a high level emergency department visits for influenza like illness. The data reflects the patient's chief complaint and may not reflect the actual diagnosis.
- State participation in Centers for Disease Control, Department of Homeland Security and other national conference calls continues.

### **Federal Actions**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) alert level remains at Phase 5. The declaration of a Phase 5 is a strong signal that the pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalize the organization, communication, and implementation of the planned mitigation measures is short.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported 109 confirmed cases of novel influenza in the United States, with one death in a twenty-three month old.
- An estimated 298 schools in 10 states are closed due to confirmed and probable cases of swine flu. The closures impact over 172,000 students and nearly 11,000 teachers. States with school closures include: AL, CA, CT, IL, MN, NY, OH, SC, TX, and WA. An additional 30 schools in three states (CT, NY and TX) closed for precautionary measures only.

### **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 Florida Department of Health has created a webpage with information at [www.doh.state.fl.us](http://www.doh.state.fl.us), and the CDC has a web page at [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu)

BE SMART, BE SAFE, BE A SURVIVOR! Go to [www.FloridaDisaster.org](http://www.FloridaDisaster.org) today to create a personal or family disaster plan. 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)