

Date: April 30, 2009

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Swine influenza (H1N1) update

Yesterday afternoon the World Health Organization (WHO) raised the pandemic alert for global influenza preparedness to Phase 5. There have been no cases of the new influenza virus, swine influenza (H1N1), reported in Washington State, though six probable cases have been identified. None of these probable cases are in Kittitas County. As of April 30, there have been 109 confirmed cases of swine influenza (H1N1) in the United States, including one death.

Kittitas County Public Health Department has been working with community health care partners to plan for the first case of swine influenza (H1N1) in Washington State and/or Kittitas County. Also, as part of this preparation process, KCPHD has requested antiviral medication from Washington State Department of Health to have on hand in the event that swine influenza cases are identified in our area. These partnerships and measures are similar to those that other local health jurisdictions in Washington State are putting into place.

At this time, county residents are encouraged to seek medical attention for influenza-like illnesses as they would in the absence of an outbreak. Residents should remember to let their health care provider know they have influenza like symptoms when they schedule an appointment; health care facilities will ask these individuals to wear a mask while in the waiting room.

Individuals should also be prepared for the possibility of school and child care closures if cases of swine influenza in Kittitas County are identified. For personal preparedness tips, visit the government website www.ready.gov.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Washington State Department of Health are updating their swine influenza web pages as the situation changes. KCPHD encourages individuals to visit their sites for the most up-to-date information at www.cdc.gov/swineflu and www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu.

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