County of San Diego

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

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April 24, 2009

San Diego County Office of Education and School Districts:

As you have likely heard from the media, swine flu has been detected in four San Diego County residents, three of them children. I want to share with you what the situation is locally, how the Division of Public Health Services, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency is responding and what you can do. There is no need at this time to consider closing schools.

We have been working closely with individual schools, where these students attended, to look for other people who might have been exposed to the virus and who became ill. Thank you for your continued collaboration with County Public Health Services as we work to protect San Diegans.

Swine Influenza Infection

As of April 24, 2009, there have been eight cases of infection of humans with swine influenza in the United States.

- Four of these cases occurred in San Diego County residents (three children and one adult).
- Two additional cases have been reported in Imperial County (one adult and one child).
- Two cases have been reported in near San Antonio, Texas in Guadalupe County (two 16 year-old schoolmates).
- All of these individuals have recovered. One adult required hospitalization.
- We anticipate that there will be additional cases detected, as we are working with our health care community to enhance surveillance for the disease.

Swine influenza, while common in pigs, is rarely seen in humans. Prior to these cases, there have been twelve swine influenza infections in humans reported in the United States since 2005. Most of these individuals had direct or indirect contact with pigs.

The symptoms of the swine influenza virus infection are similar to those of seasonal influenza. These symptoms include:

- Fever,
- Cough,
- Sore throat,
- Body aches,
- Headache,

- Chills, and
- Fatigue.

Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure), as well as deaths, have been reported with swine flu infection in people. The annual flu shot does not offer protection against this particular virus.

There are also many people with serious respiratory illnesses, including some deaths, being reported in Mexico. These cases are occurring primarily in the central part of the country. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has also confirmed that seven samples from Mexico have tested positive for a similar swine flu virus. Information about these cases was not available from the CDC so it is unknown if the individuals had mild or serious illnesses. There is currently no known link between the cases in Mexico and the United States or among all of the U.S. cases. However, because the U.S. cases have no epidemiological link, there is evidence of transmission from person-to-person.

What You Can Do

- Reassure school staff, students, and families that this is not a pandemic influenza situation. There have currently been limited cases in San Diego, all of whom have had mild symptoms. Public Health Services has set up a hotline, (858) 715-2250, to address concerns from the public about swine flu.
- If you have a particular concern about swine flu, or are concerned about possible exposure in your school, please call the County Public Health Services at (619) 515-6520.
- School personnel who are sick with flu-like symptoms should stay home.
- Students who are ill should be encouraged to stay home while sick.
- If ill individuals see their healthcare providers, samples might be collected to test for swine flu.
- Practice good hand hygiene – wash your hand properly and often.
- Cover your cough – with a tissue, or sneeze into your sleeve.

I want to thank you again for assisting Public Health Services in our efforts to protect the residents of San Diego County. For updates on swine flu please:

- Call the San Diego Swine Flu Hotline: (858) 715-2250
- Visit the County of San Diego Website: www.sdcounty.ca.gov
- Visit the CDC Swine Flu Page: www.cdc.gov/flu/swine
- Read the attached CDC Fact Sheet

Sincerely,

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Public Health Officer