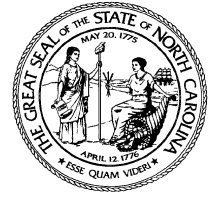




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Hoke County Health Department H1N1 Influenza Virus Update and Summary of Situation August 24, 2009

The novel Influenza A (H1N1) virus continues to spread across the United States and internationally. Since the H1N1 influenza virus was identified in April 2009, it has rapidly spread around the globe. In June of this year, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the H1N1 influenza spread a pandemic situation. According to the CDC and the state, the pandemic H1N1 influenza virus has been identified as the predominant strain of influenza circulating.

Because the pandemic H1N1 influenza virus is spreading so rapidly, the WHO is no longer reporting the number of confirmed cases for all countries. The CDC has also discontinued their reporting of confirmed and probable cases. As of July 30, 2009, the North Carolina Division of Public Health also discontinued the public reporting of confirmed and probable cases of pandemic H1N1. However, local health departments throughout North Carolina are continuing intensive monitoring of influenza activity through the states established surveillance system. Health departments will continue reporting probable and confirmed cases to the state in order to identify any pandemic H1N1 influenza associated hospitalizations and deaths. Weekly influenza surveillance summaries will be reported at the states website as the situation continues to evolve.

Hoke County health department continues local monitoring of influenza activity per state guidelines as we expect the number of influenza like illnesses to rise as the pandemic increases and we move forward into the flu season. It is important to note that most people in the US who have become ill with the novel H1N1 virus have experienced influenza like symptoms and have recovered without complications.

This situation is serious because we know that seasonal influenza and the novel H1N1 influenza can spread rapidly through a community causing illness and/or death. We also know that certain groups are at higher risk for influenza complications, especially children younger than 5 years, persons aged 65 or older, pregnant women and persons with certain chronic medical conditions. That's why we continue to encourage the public to follow good prevention practices. It is important to take precautions and be prepared in order to prevent the spread of illness.

To protect yourself, your family and your community, you should follow these good prevention practices:

- If you are sick with a influenza-like illness, stay home and keep away from other household members as much as possible. Stay at home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone (without the use of fever reducing medicine). This will keep you from infecting others and spreading the illness further.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve (if you do not have a tissue). Throw the used tissue in a trash can.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.

****However, if your symptoms get worse (such as having trouble breathing, shortness of breathe, chest pain) contact your health care provider or seek medical attention. If you seek medical care, wear a mask or cover your mouth with a tissue. Your health care provider will determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed based on current CDC guidelines.**

You can also be prepared by developing a family emergency plan. This should include storing an extra 2 weeks supply of food, medicines, and other essential supplies. Further information can be found in the "[Flu Planning Checklist](#)"

For more information about the novel H1N1 influenza situation, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu or you may contact your local Health Department at 910-875-3717.