

Novel Swine Influenza Update

April 27, 2009

In this rapidly evolving outbreak, I will attempt to provide accurate and timely updates using the best information that I can access.

Wisconsin: Background rates of influenza-like illness in Wisconsin are at low levels (<1% of patient visits). Guidelines from the Wisconsin Division of Public Health for enhanced surveillance and testing for novel swine influenza virus in Wisconsin are attached. Please remember that the collection of a clinical specimen from a patient suspected of having swine influenza is a potentially "high risk" procedure. The use of a face mask--preferably a N-95 respirator--is recommended.

Across the U.S.: As of 27 April 2009, the United States Government has reported 40 laboratory confirmed human cases of swine influenza A/H1N1 [California 7 cases, Kansas 2 cases, New York City 28 cases, Ohio 1 case, Texas 2 cases]. All cases have had mild Influenza-Like Illness with only one requiring brief hospitalization. No deaths have been reported. The viruses have the same genetic pattern based on preliminary testing. The virus is being described as a new subtype of A/H1N1 not previously detected in swine or humans.

CDC activated its Emergency Operations Center to coordinate the agency's response to this emerging health threat and yesterday the Secretary of the Department Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, declared a public health emergency in the United States. The CDC has issued a number of interim guidance documents in the past 24 hours: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance/>

In addition, CDC's Division of the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) is releasing one-quarter of its antiviral drugs, personal protective equipment, and respiratory protection devices to help states respond to the outbreak. Laboratory testing has found the swine influenza A (H1N1) virus susceptible to the prescription antiviral drugs oseltamivir and zanamivir.

CDC has NOT recommended that people avoid travel to Mexico at this time. If you are planning travel to Mexico, follow the recommendations in the link to reduce your risk of infection and help you stay healthy: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/content/SwineFluMexico.aspx>

This is a rapidly evolving situation and CDC will provide updated guidance and new information as it becomes available.

Global News from the WHO: As of 26 April, the Government of Mexico has reported 18 laboratory confirmed cases of swine influenza A/H1N1. Investigation is continuing to clarify the spread and severity of the disease in Mexico. Suspect clinical cases have been reported in 19 of the country's 32 states.

WHO and the Global Alert and Response Network (GOARN) are sending experts to Mexico to work with health authorities. WHO and its partners are actively investigating reports of suspect cases in other Member States as they occur, and are supporting field epidemiology activities, laboratory diagnosis and clinical management.

On Saturday, 25 April, upon the advice of the Emergency Committee called under the rules of the International Health Regulations, the Director-General declared this event a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

[note: unofficially, there have been nearly 2,000 reported illnesses in Mexico with 149 suspected deaths; 13 suspected in New Zealand; 6 confirmed in Canada; 7 suspected in Spain; 1 suspected in France; 1 suspected in Israel]

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DATE: April 24, 2009

TO: Wisconsin Local, Tribal and Regional Public Health Officials
Infection Preventionists
Healthcare Providers

FROM: Jeffrey P. Davis M.D.
Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases

RE: **Guidelines for enhanced surveillance and testing for novel swine influenza virus in Wisconsin**

***** Please distribute widely *****

CDC has reported 8 novel swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infections in San Diego County and Imperial County, California and San Antonio, Texas. An MMWR summarizing the investigation can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm58d0424a1.htm>. The World Health Organization has also reported swine influenza A (H1N1) infections in Mexico caused by viruses that are genetically identical to the US cases. Investigations are ongoing and updates will be forthcoming in the media and at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/investigation.htm> and <http://www.who.int/en/> (click on Disease Outbreaks).

Interim guidance on infection control, treatment, and chemoprophylaxis for swine influenza is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/recommendations.htm>. Additional information about swine influenza is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/index.htm>.

Attached are interim guidelines for testing of suspect swine influenza cases in Wisconsin. **With prior approval from the Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH)**, specimens from ill patients that meet the criteria for suspect swine influenza will be transported to and tested at the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) by PCR at no charge. Testing is a priority and should be arranged without delay when a case is suspected. Specimens must be received at the WSLH **within 24 hours of collection**. If assistance is needed to arrange prompt delivery, call the WSLH emergency number at 608-263-3280.

Once specimens are received at the WSLH, PCR testing is usually completed within 24 hours (if appropriate notification is provided). Submitters and local health officials will be notified of test results by the DPH as soon as they become available.

If you have any questions please contact:

Epidemiology and Surveillance:
Thomas Haupt M.S.
Wisconsin Division of Public Health
608-266-5326

Laboratory Issues:
Carol Kirk
Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene
608-262-1021

**GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFICATION OF SUSPECT CASES OF
NOVEL SWINE INFLUENZA – April 24, 2009**

The Wisconsin Division of Public (DPH) and the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) are requesting that health care providers collect specimens from any patient who meets the following criteria:

The patient presents with signs and symptoms characteristic of influenza (fever >100 degrees, cough or sore throat, myalgia), AND

- a. The patient has returned from Mexico, Southern California (especially San Diego and or Imperial Counties), Arizona, New Mexico or Texas within 7 days prior to the onset of signs and symptoms, or
- b. Has been in contact with ill persons from these areas in the 7 days prior to the onset of signs and symptoms

Specimen collection from patients who meet the above criteria should include:

One oropharyngeal (throat) swab AND one nasopharyngeal (NP) swab in the same vial of viral transport medium (VTM)

- Swabs used for specimen collection should have a dacron tip and aluminum or plastic shaft
- Do not use calcium alginate swabs, cotton swabs and wooden-shaft swabs, as they may interfere with testing. Specimens should be placed at 4°C (40° F) immediately after collection and maintained at refrigerator temperatures during transport to WSLH

PROMPT SHIPPING OF SPECIMENS IS NECESSARY!!

**PLEASE CONTACT THE WISCONSIN DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH FOR APPROVAL
BEFORE SPECIMENS ARE SUBMITTED TO THE STATE LABORATORY OF HYGIENE**

During office hours (7:45 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday-Friday) call 608-266-5326.
After hours call 608-258-0099 and ask for the Communicable Disease Epidemiologist “on-call”

SPECIMENS SHOULD ARRIVE AT THE STATE LABORATORY OF HYGIENE WITHIN 24 HOURS. If submitters need assistance to arrange prompt delivery of specimens, they should call the WSLH emergency number at 608-263-3280. Please be aware that only specimens sent with this completed requisition form will be tested for avian influenza.

**SHIPMENT OF VIRAL SURVEILLANCE SPECIMENS VIA DUNHAM EXPRESS
TO THE WISCONSIN STATE LABORATORY OF HYGIENE**

Specimen Packaging (WSLH Kit # 18 or equivalent):

- **Triple package as “Biological substance, Category B UN 3373”**
- Securely tape the cap of the specimen container, wrap specimen with absorbent material; place the specimen vial into a biohazard bag; place the completed requisition form into the outer pocket of the bag.
- Place the bagged specimen and form in the styrofoam mailer with a frozen kool-pak.
- Replace lid on the styrofoam box; close and securely tape the cardboard box shut.
- Attach the WSLH address label to the package:
**State Lab - Virology
465 Henry Mall
Madison, WI 53706**
- Attach the “*Biological substance, Category B / UN 3373*” label to the package.
- Attach your *return address* label; include the *name and telephone number* of the person who knows the content of the package (requirement) with the return address

Shipping Arrangements:

- The WSLH has a contract with Dunham Express for shipment of specimens to the WSLH, with charges billed to the WSLH. **You are not required to ship via Dunham Express unless you wish to have the transport charges billed to the WSLH.**
- Specimens will be picked up during regular working hours, but you must confirm the time with the Dunham Express office in your area.
- Specimens will be delivered to the WSLH the following day, Monday through Friday. **If you must ship on a Friday, contact the WSLH Emergency Answering Service at 608-263-3280 for instructions.** All package preparation should be completed before the courier arrives.
- **Contact the Dunham Express office in your area (see list below);**

Appleton area:	Call 920-722-6360
Eau Claire area:	Call 715-874-4595
LaCrosse area:	Call 608-779-4588
Madison area:	Call 608- 242-1000
Milwaukee area:	Call 414-435-0002
Niagara area:	Call 715-251-1909
Wausau area:	Call 715-355-0400
- **Give the office the following information:**
 - The State Lab-Virology account number: **7263**
 - Account name: **State Lab –Emergency Response**
 - Your name and phone number
 - Your pickup address, including other location information (e.g., room number)
 - The destination: **State Lab - Virology, 465 Henry Mall, Madison, WI 53706**
 - Shipment description, if asked: **Viral specimens for overnight delivery**

If delivery to the WSLH within 24 hours cannot be accomplished using the standard Dunham Express (Monday through Friday) pick-up and delivery schedule, contact the WSLH Emergency Answering Service at 608-263-3280 for instructions.

