



## **2009 H1N1 FLU UPDATE**

Updated 5/5/2009, 4:55 p.m.

### **Current State**

As of Tuesday morning, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirmed 403 cases of the H1N1 flu in 38 states.

Over the past two weeks, there has been unprecedented coordination among federal, state, local, and tribal governments and the private sector as we have prepared for a potential pandemic.

All 50 states have received allotments of antiviral medicine and personal protective equipment from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Strategic National Stockpile. These distributions include antiviral courses, gloves, surgical masks and respirators.

### **Pandemic Alert Level**

At this point, the World Health Organization (WHO) alert level remains at Phase 5. If the alert level changes, this is simply a reflection of the number of countries with confirmed cases of H1N1 flu; it would not indicate that the H1N1 strain has become more severe or that our mitigation efforts have been ineffective. The U.S. Government has anticipated that the WHO might raise its alert level to six from the beginning of the outbreak, and our preparation efforts have been consistently executed to meet the challenges associated with the WHO designation of level six.

### **Travel Advisory**

The Department of State continues to recommend against all non-essential travel to Mexico. As always, in accordance with public health guidance, individuals who do not feel well and have flu-like symptoms should avoid travel.

### **Border**

Based on the advice of the public health community and the best scientific information we have, the U.S. Government will not be closing the nation's borders. We continue to remain focused on the mitigation efforts that have been identified by both the CDC and WHO as the most effective measures to combat the current state of the H1N1 flu.

As of today, U.S Customs and Border Protection has referred a total of 343 suspected cases to the CDC or state and local health officials. There have been no confirmed cases with 290 negative test results. The remaining 53 cases are currently pending. Health officials are responsible for following up with travelers who have been tested to provide information regarding their diagnosis.

## **Schools**

On Tuesday, CDC revised its interim guidance on school closures based on additional information about the H1N1 flu. The CDC no longer recommends that communities with a laboratory-confirmed case of H1N1 flu generally close schools, but, rather, encourages children who do not feel well and have flu-like symptoms to stay home for seven days in accordance with public health guidance.

## **Critical Infrastructure**

We have been in continuous communication with the private sector community to relay information concerning H1N1 flu preparedness and response, with a particular focus on sharing information with critical infrastructure partners and the travel, tourism, and transportation industries. We are working closely with these partners to ensure that they get the information they need to keep their employees informed and critical infrastructure sites can continue operations across the country.

## **Department of Homeland Security**

The steps taken by the U.S. Government as well as state, local, tribal and private sector partners have successfully limited the current impact of this virus; however, the 2009 H1N1 flu will likely re-emerge in the future – even as early as this fall when the seasonal flu season begins. For this reason, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) continues to caution against complacency and encourages ongoing preparedness activities, including the following:

- Individuals should continue common-sense hygiene practices to prevent the spread of influenza including washing hands regularly, covering your mouth when you cough, staying home if you are sick, etc..
- Families should have contingency plans for dealing with school closures and other developments that might impact day-to-day activities. As we make plans for the future, all of us should be thinking about how we would manage major disruptions to our schedules. A widespread outbreak could require temporary changes in many areas of society, such as schools, places of work, transportation and other public services we count on every day.
- Businesses should have contingency plans in place to deal with absent or sick employees so that operations can continue.
- Governments at all levels should stay focused and continue to work together, as we have for the past two weeks.

For more information on the 2009 Influenza A H1N1 outbreak, visit:

[www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)