

**2009 H1N1 FLU UPDATE**

Department of Homeland Security

Updated 4/29/2009, 3:14 pm

The U.S. government continues to take aggressive action to address the current outbreak of 2009 H1N1 flu in the United States.

This morning, we confirmed the first U.S. fatality as a result of the H1N1 virus – a 23 month old child in Texas. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family of this child and all families who are coping with H1N1 flu virus both in the United States and in other countries.

Our goals during this public health emergency are to reduce transmission and illness severity, and provide information to health care providers, public health officials, and the American people in addressing the challenges posed by this newly identified virus.

This is a rapidly changing situation. We continue to respond aggressively based on what we know and are trying to stay ahead of the outbreak. In the days ahead, we are likely to continue to see more cases, more hospitalizations, and additional deaths from this outbreak.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised that schools with confirmed cases of H1N1– or suspected cases linked to confirmed cases – should consider closing on a temporary basis. Parents are encouraged to prepare contingency plans in the event that a school closure requires caring for a child.

At the advice of the public health community and the best scientific information we have, we do not intend to close our nation's borders. With containment no longer feasible, closing the border would do little to prevent a virus that is already present in the United States. We continue to remain focused on mitigation efforts at the recommendation of both the CDC and World Health Organization (WHO) based on what we currently know about H1N1.

Yesterday, Secretary Napolitano announced the establishment of an operations coordination task force for the H1N1 flu outbreak. This task force will consist of chiefs of staff from relevant departments and agencies to focus on current operations and coordination of the U.S. government's response to H1N1 and plan for future needs. In addition, President Obama also has requested \$1.5 billion from Congress to support H1N1 response.

There are currently 44 million treatment courses of antiviral drugs (Tamiflu and Relenza) in the Strategic National Stockpile that are available to states. HHS is releasing 25 percent of those courses, making them available to all states, but prioritizing to affected states. Indiana, New Mexico, and New York City have already received their 25 percent allocations. We estimate all states and territories will

receive their allocation by May 3. {Note: The 50 million courses included in the stockpile includes allocations for containment domestically and internationally).

In addition to the Strategic National Stockpile, the Department of Defense has procured and strategically prepositioned 8.2 million treatment courses of Tamiflu to preserve the ability of servicemen and women and DoD civilians to provide for national defense and sustain current military operations.

The travel advisory issued by the Department of State on April 27 remains in effect, recommending against non-essential travel to Mexico. The U.S. Embassy in Mexico City and all U.S. Consulates in Mexico also have suspended all non-essential services to the public until May 6.

At our borders, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) personnel continue to watch for signs of illness among travelers entering the United States. Travelers presenting symptoms will be isolated and evaluated by a public health official. CBP is also handing out CDC Traveler's Health Alert Notices in both English and Spanish to all travelers from Mexico.

As of today, CBP has referred a total of 49 suspected cases to the CDC or state and local health officials. All results have been negative, except 8 that are still pending. No one has been turned away and we are not denying entry into the United States on the basis of illness. Precautions are being taken to protect travelers and border personnel. Anyone that is exhibiting symptoms is referred to an isolated room where they can be evaluated by public health officials before proceeding to their destination.

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has instituted similar protocols at airports, watching for individuals exhibiting flu-like symptoms and taking the appropriate measures, including requesting the individual proceed to an area removed from other traveling passengers where local health officials will meet them.

The Department of Agriculture (USDA) continues to work with all state animal health officials to affirm they have no signs of animal illness in their states. To date, no cases have been reported. USDA and the United States Trade Representative also remind our international partners that U.S. pork and pork products are safe and there is no basis for restricting imports.

Citizens across the United States should continue to monitor this situation and take steps to increase their personal preparedness. In particular, individuals should following these steps to prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you may want to contact your health care provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed.
- If you get sick with influenza, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

The federal government will continue to conduct daily conference calls with homeland security advisors, state and local elected officials, tribal governments, health professionals, school officials, fusion centers, private sector, infrastructure protection partners, Congressional representatives, as well as our international partners to ensure a collaborative and coordinated response to the H1N1 flu.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/swineflu/](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/)