

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For More Information Contact

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11 CONFIRMED H1N1 A CASES IN VIRGINIA

The number of confirmed cases in Virginia of the new influenza A (H1N1), also known as “swine flu.” is now 11, according to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).

The 11 cases include seven in the Central Shenandoah Health District (five adult men and two adult women), two in the Chesterfield Health District (one adult man and one adult woman), an adult man in the Three Rivers Health District and one female child in the Norfolk Health District. None of these cases involved a hospitalization and all patients have recovered or are recovering well.

The Norfolk preschool that closed on Monday as the result of the case involving the female child has reopened in accordance with new school closing recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These recommendations no longer suggest school closing for confirmed cases.

The Central Shenandoah cases are all at Washington and Lee University. VDH has made an exception to its usual policy in reporting these cases at a specific location to enhance local control and treatment efforts.

The number of cases reported today reflects the reclassification of probable cases as confirmed. Prior to today, influenza samples were initially tested by the state laboratory with confirmation coming from the CDC in Atlanta. In the initial test, a sample was classified as probable if it had characteristics consistent with the new virus. It generally took more than 48 hours for the CDC to confirm cases.

To accelerate the time it takes to confirm samples, the CDC has provided testing materials for the new H1N1 virus to state laboratories, which now will be able to more quickly confirm samples.

“The good news is that we are continuing to see mild cases of H1N1 infection and patients are receiving good medical care and are recovering,” said Virginia’s Health Commissioner, Karen Remley, MD, MBA. “It also will be helpful that we are among the first states in the country to be allowed by the CDC to conduct all testing for the H1N1 virus. This will enhance our ability to identify and track where these cases are occurring and to respond as necessary,” Dr. Remley said.

More

11 Confirmed Cases of H1N1 in Virginia

Dr. Remley said that most patients being tested do not have the new virus and that the state will now concentrate its testing on those segments of the population that are at higher risk for complications from the new influenza H1N1. These include people who are hospitalized with influenza-like illnesses, pregnant women, the elderly, the very young, health care workers, and people with underlying chronic health conditions.

The current H1N1 influenza outbreak is caused by an influenza A virus previously not detected in humans or animals. Symptoms are similar to those of seasonal flu and typically include fever, cough and sore throat. Additional symptoms may include headache, chills, fatigue and body aches. Persons with H1N1 influenza are contagious for up to seven days after the onset of illness and possibly longer if they are still symptomatic.

Dr. Remley advised anyone with these symptoms to protect themselves and others by:

- Staying home from work or school and limiting their contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Calling their health care providers or their health department before seeking care so that the necessary infection control measures can be put in place.
- Covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and throwing the tissue in the trash after use.
- Washing their hands often with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective.
- Limiting close contact with sick people
- Preventing the spread of germs by not touching eyes, nose or mouth

VDH has established an information line at (877) ASK-VDH3, or (877) 275-8343, for anyone with concerns or questions about H1N1 influenza.

Also, for further information, consult the CDC's Web site at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu and the VDH Web site at www.vdh.virginia.gov.

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