

For immediate release:
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Health, Public Education Departments Report Probable Cases at Socorro Schools No School Closures Are Recommended at This Time

(Santa Fe) – The Superintendent of Socorro Consolidated Schools, working with the New Mexico Department of Health and New Mexico Public Education Department, sent a letter this afternoon to the Socorro Consolidated Schools where two probable cases of H1N1 flu attended Raymond Sarracino Middle School and Socorro High School before becoming sick. A 14-year-old female and 15-year-old male both from Socorro County became sick Sunday and has not attended school since. Both students are recovering.

“The parents responded appropriately by keeping their children home from school when they developed influenza-like symptoms,” said Health Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD. “This is the best step parents can take to prevent the spread of illness.”

At this time, the Health and Public Education departments are not recommending the schools be closed or after-school activities be suspended based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which is leading the H1N1 investigation for the United States. The Department of Health is continuing its investigation.

“We are in constant contact with the Department of Health and will work with health officials to alert school personnel and the public as soon as we have any information about H1N1 cases that may affect schools,” said New Mexico Education Secretary Veronica C. García. “We will take the precautions necessary to make sure our students are safe.”

The Department of Health is also continuing its investigation into the two probable cases in a 1-year-old male from Santa Fe County and an 18-year-old male from Valencia County. The Department has a total of four probable cases and no confirmed cases so far. The Department does not have information yet about how the probable cases may have gotten sick.

The Department expects to receive information from the CDC on the probable cases from Valencia and Santa Fe counties by the end of today and the cases from Socorro County early next week. Timing depends on the CDC. The Department’s Scientific Laboratory received new test materials from the CDC on Thursday so the Laboratory can confirm swine influenza without sending samples to CDC by next week.

H1N1 flu symptoms include fever (above 100) and sore throat or cough. If sick, people should stay home and call their health care provider.

“The best precautions you can take are washing your hands frequently, staying home if you are sick and covering your cough with a tissue or your arm,” Dr. Vigil said.

For current information please consult, the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/> and the NM Department of Health website at: http://nmhealth.org/FLU/seasonal/swine_flu.html. For general questions about swine flu, call the state’s H1N1 Influenza Hotline at 1-866-850-5893. People who have symptoms may call the Nurse Advice New Mexico at 1-877-725-2552. The Department also set up a specific hotline for callers who speak Spanish: 1-800-784-0394.

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