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Department of Health Increases Efforts to Look For Swine Influenza Cases No Cases Have Been Reported in New Mexico So Far

(Santa Fe) – The New Mexico Department of Health is coordinating with national and local agencies to increase efforts to look for cases of swine influenza in New Mexico and make recommendations to medical providers regarding clinical evaluation. So far, New Mexico has no cases of swine influenza.

Today, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced there are seven cases in California and Texas. No one has died. The CDC is investigating whether there are common links among patients.

Swine influenza is a respiratory disease of pigs. Swine flu does not normally infect humans, however sporadic human infections with swine flu do occasionally occur.

The Department of Health is in daily communication with CDC and neighboring states to track cases nationwide, and to learn about their contact investigation so the Department is up to date with the best information to provide the public about preventing and controlling the virus. The Department is sending a health alert today to New Mexico medical providers with information on clinical evaluation, patient management, lab testing, treatment and isolation.

“Even though we have no cases in New Mexico, we are making sure we stay on top of this so we can keep the public informed and respond quickly if we get cases,” said Health Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD.

The Department is working with health officials in Mexico to make sure they are aware of the national cases, to help them look for potential cases and to coordinate testing of samples if needed. The Department’s Scientific Laboratory in Albuquerque is ready to test any samples.

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular seasonal flu and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. The Department recommends that people who are experiencing these symptoms should stay home and see a doctor if the symptoms do not get better. People who are sick should cover their mouths when they cough. To protect yourself, wash your hands frequently.

CDC is looking into whether the current influenza vaccine can protect against the swine flu. People who want influenza vaccine should check with their provider for availability, or check with their local public health office if they are uninsured.

For more information about swine influenza, look up <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/index.htm>.

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