



For Immediate Release:  
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## **Department of Health's Laboratory Tests for Potential Swine Flu** *Lab Tests 28 Samples Today; Expects to Receive More*

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson held a news conference this evening to announce the New Mexico Department of Health's Epidemiology and Response Division is investigating two probable cases of swine flu. The cases are a one-year old male from Santa Fe County and an 18-year-old male from Valencia County. The Health Department's Scientific Laboratory in Albuquerque is sending the two probable samples to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention today for confirmatory testing. CDC should receive the samples on Thursday and we should get results in one to two days.

“While there are no confirmed cases, we are taking action and every necessary precaution will be met to ensure the safety of New Mexicans,” said Governor Richardson. “I have directed the state Department of Health to act quickly and thoroughly and we should get results on the two probable cases sent to the CDC within a few days.”

The Health Department is investigating the two cases and has interviewed patients, located and interviewed patient contacts and are evaluating whether patients and close contacts need anti-virals.

“We are taking action and are on top of any possible swine flu outbreak and making sure New Mexico is prepared if we get cases here,” said Governor Richardson. “We will continue to update the public as we get new information.”

Nationally the CDC has reported there are 91 cases in 10 states, California, Texas, Ohio, Kansas, Arizona, Indiana, Massachusetts, Nevada and Michigan. The swine influenza virus is a new virus, never before recognized in the United States or anywhere in the world. The new virus contains genetic pieces from flu viruses that infect pigs, birds and humans. It appears able to spread among humans like the familiar human flu viruses that circulate every winter. Because this virus is new, it is likely that most people do not have immunity against it.

The Department of Health has Tamiflu© and Relenza©, anti-viral medications to treat sick individuals if New Mexico has confirmed swine flu cases. The Department is

expecting to receive an additional supply from the federal government by the end of the week.

“There are steps you can take to protect yourself and your family,” Health Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD said. “It’s simple advice, but it’s the best way to avoid spreading viruses: Wash your hands frequently, cover your cough with your arm and don’t go to work or send your children to school if they have influenza-like symptoms.”

Symptoms include fever, sore throat and cough. While at home, if symptoms become more severe people should call their health care provider first for instructions regarding care.

The Department of Health continues to advise medical providers about clinical evaluation and patient symptoms of swine flu. The Department is also consulting with the Public Education Department to give schools and parents information about swine flu symptoms and prevention. If New Mexico has a swine influenza case in a school, the Department of Health will work with the Public Education Department and the local school district to determine whether the school should be closed.

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](http://nmhealth.org/FLU/seasonal/swine_flu.html). For general questions about swine flu, call the state’s Swine Influenza Hotline at 1-866-850-5893. People who have symptoms may call the Nurse Advice New Mexico at 1-877-725-2552.

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