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Governor Bill Richardson Reports that New Mexico is Ready to Respond if State Gets Swine Flu Cases

No Cases Have Been Reported in New Mexico So Far

(Santa Fe) – Governor Bill Richardson said today that the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and New Mexico Department of Health already have emergency response plans in place if New Mexico develops any swine flu cases. So far, New Mexico has no cases of swine influenza.

The United States declared a public health emergency today due to 20 confirmed cases of swine flu in California, Texas, Ohio, New York and Kansas as well as numerous cases in Mexico. In the U.S., patients are 7 to 54 years old; one person has been hospitalized and no one has died.

"New Mexico has been planning for a potential public health emergency for years, and we will be prepared to respond if any New Mexicans get sick with swine flu," Governor Richardson said. "We are taking this situation seriously and are doing everything we can to detect cases and minimize the impact if we get any cases in New Mexico."

The Department of Health has been coordinating with national and local agencies to increase efforts to look for swine flu in New Mexico. The Department is checking the state's inventory supply of anti-viral medications, Tamiflu and Relenza, and working with its Scientific Laboratory to determine rapid test capability of patient samples.

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 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 of Health recommends that people who are experiencing these symptoms should stay home and away from people. They should call their 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.

"The Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management continues to closely monitor the developing influenza situation. We have been working in close coordination with our counterparts in California, Arizona, and Texas, as well as the public health community," said DHSEM Cabinet Secretary Tim Manning.

The Department of Health is continuing its daily communication with U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 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 has alerted New Mexico medical providers with information on clinical evaluation, patient management, lab testing, treatment and isolation.

"We have an extensive statewide influenza surveillance system in place and are communicating with all those sites that look for influenza to make sure they have up-to-date information," said Health Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD. "Our staff is available and ready to investigate any suspect cases that might arise."

For more information about swine influenza, look up <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/index.htm> or call 866-850-5893.

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