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May 4, 2009

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *JFielding ms*  
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **NEW FLU A H1N1 (PREVIOUSLY CALLED SWINE FLU) – UPDATE #6**

In follow-up to my report of April 29, 2009, this is to provide you with an update on new flu A H1N1 (previously called swine Influenza).

**Disease Summary**

**Currently there are 11 confirmed cases, including six cases in Long Beach, of new flu A H1N1 in Los Angeles County.** These individuals have experienced mild to moderate illness and have not required hospitalization. There have been no deaths linked to flu A H1N1 in Los Angeles County, however because there are more than 1,000 flu-related deaths in the County annually, a death associated with the new flu would not be unexpected.

We are continuing our investigation of possible cases and awaiting laboratory results on six probable cases. There has been increase in reports of influenza-like illness and anticipate that additional cases will be identified in coming days as a result of increased surveillance.

As of today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reporting 286 confirmed cases of flu A H1N1 in the United States in 36 states and one death in Texas. California now reports 30 confirmed flu A H1N1 cases in 7 counties and probable cases in 19 counties. The current data on flu A H1N1 cases in the U.S. continue to suggest that the disease pattern is similar to seasonal flu.

Mexico, as reported by World Health Organization (WHO), currently has 590 confirmed cases of flu A H1N1 and 25 confirmed deaths due to flu A H1N1. Overall the WHO has reported 1,085 confirmed cases in 21 countries including the United States and Mexico

(see Attachment 1, Table 2). The 26 confirmed flu A H1N1 deaths are limited to Mexico (25) and the United States (1).

### **Department of Public Health Response**

The Department of Public Health (DPH) continues to engage in a range of activities including enhanced surveillance; reminders regarding respiratory hygiene to the public, health care providers, and partner agencies; continued investigation of possible cases; and managing of federal resources. Specific activities include:

- **DOC Activation**: The Department Operations Center (DOC) remains activated and continues to function in an Incident Command Structure to facilitate management of DPH's surveillance, communications, and response activities. The County's Office of Emergency Management is present at the DOC.
- **Enhanced Surveillance**: DPH continues to work with the Long Beach and Pasadena Health Departments, emergency rooms, physicians, hospitals, and schools to monitor for any cases of flu A H1N1 in the County. In addition, DPH staff continue to monitor DPH's Syndromic Surveillance Systems and re-align staff to ensure that the DPH Public Health Laboratory can manage the increased workload.
- **Case Investigation**: DPH has organized and activated case investigation teams. Our teams investigate cases occurring within the Los Angeles County health department jurisdiction. Case investigations in the cities of Long Beach and Pasadena are conducted and reported by the respective health departments.
- **Schools**: Some of the initial cases identified were among school-aged children and teens. The DPH response approach entails an assessment of the severity extent of illness and a set of recommended actions to help reduce local transmission. This response can involve aggressive flu prevention health education, closure of specific classrooms, grades or entire schools. To date, DPH has not recommended a school closure using this approach.
- **Antivirals**: DPH has warehoused and inventoried Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) materials received, including antivirals.
- **Health Education and Media**: DPH has been working with media outlets and community partners to educate the public about what they can do to avoid all types of flu, including flu A H1N1. Updated information is regularly posted on the DPH website: <http://ph.lacounty.gov>.

- Specialized Outreach: DPH continues to maintain close contact with governmental and community partners including outreach to health care workers and first responders to provide them with guidance on how to care for potential and confirmed flu A H1N1 cases. Guidance documents for first responders, clinicians, treatment and prophylaxis, homeless shelters, homecare, business travel, prevention and factsheets (English and Spanish) have been developed and posted to the DPH website.

### **WHO, Federal, and State Responses**

The following sections summarize response activities being implemented by international, federal, and state agencies.

- World Health Organization (WHO): WHO's current influenza pandemic alert remains at Phase 5 (human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries). Given the widespread presence of the virus, WHO considers containment of the outbreak infeasible and continues to instruct countries to focus on mitigation measures.
- Federal Response: The CDC continues to host daily conference calls with state health officers to share up-to-date information about their ongoing disease investigations. Representatives from DPH participate in these calls.
- State: The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) continues to coordinate outbreak investigations with the CDC and local health officials in counties where cases have occurred. The CDPH continues to require increased surveillance statewide for patients with flu-like illness and has expanded public health laboratory testing of potential flu specimens. The State's Joint Emergency Operations Center of CDPH, in coordination with the California Emergency Management Agency remains activated. CDPH continues to host daily conference calls with local health officers throughout California. Representatives from DPH participate in these calls.

We will keep you apprised as warranted. If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

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c: Chief Executive Officer  
Acting County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors