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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOLANO HEALTH OFFICIALS RECOMMEND PRECAUTIONS RELATED TO SWINE FLU

Friday morning (April 24), Solano County health officials were notified that there have been eight confirmed cases of swine flu in humans in the United States, six in Southern California and two in Texas.

In addition, the Minister of Health in Mexico announced Friday that Mexico has over 800 cases of swine flu in humans and approximately 60 people have died. While awaiting guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the California Department of Public Health, the Solano County Public Health Officer is asking residents to take precautionary measures, like those recommended during regular flu seasons, to protect themselves and their families, and to reduce the potential spread of this virus.

“Swine flu is a respiratory disease caused by a type A influenza virus that is sometimes seen in pigs, but rarely seen in humans. From the cases in the U.S. and Mexico, it is spreading from person to person in the air through respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing. It can also be spread by infected people touching objects,” said Ronald W. Chapman, MD, MPH, Solano County Public Health Officer.

“The strain of this swine flu has been typed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and has been identified as a new strain the world has never seen before. Therefore, the regular seasonal flu vaccine from this past season does not protect against it, and there is no immunity to this virus in our population,” Dr. Chapman said.

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“I am asking our residents to take the following precautions, as you would during a regular flu season, but with added importance because there is no immunity to this virus,” Dr. Chapman said.

- 1) If you are ill with a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more and have a cough or sore throat, stay home from work or school, until symptoms are gone.
- 2) Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- 3) Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners can also be effective, but warm water and soap are best.
- 4) Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- 5) Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth as germs spread that way from objects you have touched that may have also been touched by someone infected with the virus.

“Due to how long it takes to develop new vaccine, up to 9 months, and from what we’ve learned in studies of past Influenza A virus outbreaks, the sooner community members take the precautionary steps above, the better their health and outcomes. People who become ill, their caregivers, and people in direct contact with them, should distance themselves from others who are well. Fewer people get infected and the whole community will be healthier as a result of the precautionary measures,” Dr. Chapman said.

“If you have a fever of 100 degrees or above, with a cough or a sore throat, and are asking the question, ‘Am I too sick to go to work?’ the answer is ‘yes,’” Dr. Chapman said. “I am recommending most people who have flu-like symptoms can care for themselves at home, and treat this virus as they would with the regular flu. Rest, drink plenty of fluids and take over the counter flu medicines to relieve symptoms. You should see your health care provider immediately if you have any severe symptoms such as trouble breathing,” Dr. Chapman said.

Solano Public Health will provide the public with updates as new information is learned.

For further information on swine flu and the current human cases, visit www.cdc.gov or www.cdph.ca.gov.

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