



**Health Department**

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Administration

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## **City of Milwaukee Focuses on Risk Communication to Address Swine Flu Disease**

*The Health Department unveils a five step strategic plan for disease control and prevention*

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) is focusing on risk communication as a major part of its five-step pandemic emergency response plan to address the threat of potential swine flu disease in the community, said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker.

“Risk communication is a critical part of any outbreak, and includes contacting and collaborating with our key stakeholders,” he said. “We are quickly pushing information to schools, health care providers and the general public to allay fears and to provide as much information as possible regarding this ongoing investigation.”

Other parts of the strategic plan are Surveillance and Case Management, Community Disease Control, Healthcare Infection Control and Clinical Management, and Interagency / Intergovernmental Coordination.

To date, the Health Department has taken the following actions:

- Connected with Milwaukee Public Schools officials on alert messaging and asked that they monitor absenteeism closely for clusters of flu-like illness and report to us.
- Begun to develop similar communication to charter & private schools, as well as to local universities and large employers
- Developed an auto-dial phone message to private health care professionals to provide swine flu information, case criteria and outbreak update
- Staffed our swine flu hotline - - 414-286-3616 - - which has to date has logged over 200 calls with approximately 60 calls zero’ing out to speak to live person as of 8 AM today. A majority of callers included questions on signs symptoms of disease and travel to affected areas.

The MHD, along with many regional partners, has been working on a pandemic influenza preparedness and response plan for over four years. The department has conducted briefings and trainings with key regional stakeholders, including educational institutions, local-area businesses, and community and faith-based organizations.

“While there are no confirmed cases in the city or state, this investigation is rapidly evolving globally,” Baker said. “Again, I must emphasize that it is only a matter of time before we see disease in our community therefore we ask that residents take these precautions very seriously to protect themselves and their loved ones.”