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For Immediate Release
May 4, 2009

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An Additional School Temporarily Closed by the City of Milwaukee Health Department *Health Officials Say 72 Cases of H1N1 Influenza in City*

The City of Milwaukee Health Department today issued one additional order for school closure as cases of Influenza A (H1N1) S-OIV (Swine-Origin Influenza Virus), or H1N1 S-OIV, continued to rise in Milwaukee.

The new school to be closed is Alexander Hamilton High School, located at 6215 W. Warnimont Ave. Hamilton is MPS' largest high school, with an enrollment of 1,995 students.

The Department has now issued orders for the closure of 22 schools, and one childcare facility. A complete list of school and childcare closures is available at www.milwaukee.gov/health.

The total number of confirmed and probable cases in the City rose by 18 from yesterday, and now includes 70 probable and two confirmed.

"We continue to identify persons in the community, including school-aged children, who have had symptoms consistent with swine flu and who were in contact with these cases," said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. "It is not surprising that these symptomatic contacts, in addition to the 18 new cases, have caused more exposures at schools. We can expect the case count to continue to rise in the coming days."

The decision to close a school is not taken lightly, he said.

At this time, a school is closed if there is lab information that says that a probable or confirmed case attends a school or if there is a symptomatic contact of a probable or confirmed case that attends a school, Baker said.

Health officials will meet this weekend to re-evaluate the possibility of opening schools sooner than the CDC-recommended 14 day period.

During the time that a school is closed, the City of Milwaukee Health Department is urging that staff and children of that school to remain home during the closure period and not re-congregate in community settings. However, if there are no symptoms in any household member, then others in the household who do not work or attend the affected school are not restricted in their activities.

Health officials emphasized that the need for staff and children of closed schools to remain at home stems from the fact that they may have been exposed at the school, and that even if they feel well they may become infectious to others – including vulnerable individuals such as pregnant women, the elderly, small children, and those with weak immune systems such as people with cancer or organ transplants.

Health officials again stressed their recommendation that any person in Milwaukee who has symptoms consistent with influenza stay home from work or school, and contact their healthcare professional to help slow the spread of disease in the community. Symptoms of influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, and runny or stuffy nose.

Some ways to stay healthy and to protect yourself and those around you from getting the flu include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your upper sleeve. If you use a tissue, throw it away after one use.
- Use your own drinking cups and straws.
- Avoid being exposed to people who are sick with flu-like symptoms.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Eat nutritious meals, get plenty of rest and do not smoke.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces (i.e., door knobs, refrigerator handle, telephone, faucets)

To learn more about swine influenza, visit <http://pandemic.wisconsin.gov/> or www.milwaukee.gov/health.

Or visit us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MKEhealth> or in Spanish at <http://twitter.com/MKEsalud>.

Residents can also dial 2-1-1 to have their questions about swine flu answered in both English and Spanish.