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For Immediate Release  
May 7, 2009

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## H1N1 Influenza Cases in Community Rise to 174 *Health Officials Say Trend Will Continue*

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) has identified 54 additional cases of H1N1 influenza in the city since Wednesday, bringing the total number of probable and confirmed cases to 174. Of those, 120 have been confirmed.

The MHD expects the number of confirmed cases to continue to rise rapidly over the next several days as improved laboratory testing becomes available at the City of Milwaukee Health Department. So far, the CDC has found that virtually all cases initially classified as “probable” become confirmed after further laboratory validation.

“The City of Milwaukee Health Department continues to rapidly assess new information received from both the CDC and State of Wisconsin Division of Public Health, as well as through local surveillance to improve our understanding and response to swine flu virus transmission within the city,” said Paul Biedrzycki, Director of Disease Control and Environmental Health.

Health officials say that even if the new virus is no more severe than regular, seasonal influenza, many people around the country and within Milwaukee will likely be hospitalized as a result of the infection.

“Swine influenza continues to circulate throughout the nation and our community,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. “Although guidelines to address spread of the disease throughout the community have changed, this does not mean that swine flu no longer poses a threat.”

Health officials again stressed their recommendation that any person in Milwaukee who has symptoms consistent with influenza stay home from work or school to help slow the spread of disease. Persons with symptoms should also consult with their healthcare provider. Symptoms of influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, and runny or stuffy nose. Staying home when ill is very important to prevent exposing high-risk individuals, such as pregnant women or people with weak immune systems, to this new virus.

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](http://www.milwaukee.gov/health).

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