



Tom Barrett
Mayor

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

Health Department

Administration

Frank P. Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 North Broadway, 3rd Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202-3653 phone (414) 286-3521 fax (414) 286-5990
web site: www.milwaukee.gov/health

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Media Contacts:

Kawanza Newson
414-286-3548 Office
414-732-7250 Mobile

All Cases of Novel H1N1 Influenza Now Confirmed in City *Health Officials Say 319 Total Cases in Milwaukee*

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) has confirmed 319 cases of novel H1N1 influenza in the city, health officials said Monday. The number of confirmed cases in the city is now greater than have been confirmed in any other US state except Illinois.

The jump in confirmed case count is partially due to improved testing now conducted at the MHD laboratory. As a result, all cases that were previously classified as “probable” are confirmed. In addition, the combined capacity of the MHD laboratory, the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene, and the Midwest Respiratory Virus Program laboratory at Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin to confirm cases may be greater than the capacity in some other states.

Still, it is clear that this disease is prevalent here and is continuing to spread throughout our community. Health officials are conducting an intensive, ongoing investigation to better understand the local epidemiology of this novel influenza.

In addition to rising case counts across the country, the CDC has confirmed a third death from this disease nationwide, and expects the number of hospitalizations and deaths to continue to rise.

Therefore, even though many people have experienced only mild illness, the risk of hospitalization and death has led the CDC and the City of Milwaukee Health Department to continue to emphasize the importance of avoiding exposure to this disease. MHD officials stress that any person in Milwaukee who has symptoms consistent with influenza stay home from work or school to help slow the spread of disease and to minimize the risk to others.

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.

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

Please note: Media wishing to get daily updated case counts should contact Kawanza.