



Tom Barrett
Mayor

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Commissioner of Health

Health Department

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First H1N1 Death Reported in Wisconsin

Virus widespread throughout our community

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) is reporting the first death related to novel H1N1 infection in Milwaukee. This is also the first such death in Wisconsin. The case involves an adult who had a common underlying medical condition that made them more at risk of influenza complications.

Conditions that make people more at risk for complications of influenza include: age of 65 or older, age under 5, pregnancy, diabetes, lung problems including asthma and emphysema, certain heart conditions, diseases or medications that weaken the immune system, kidney diseases, children on chronic aspirin treatment, and some other chronic medical problems.

“At the outset of our investigation we stressed that H1N1 is a new virus, to which nobody has any immunity, and for which there is currently no vaccine,” said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. “We continue to see daily increases in our case count and as a result we are also seeing increases in the number of persons who have been hospitalized with H1N1 infection.”

“I want to ensure city residents that we remain committed during this intensive investigation and that all efforts are being taken to protect the health of Milwaukee residents,” said Mayor Tom Barrett. “H1N1 remains widespread throughout the nation and is present in our community. I urge you to follow the recommendations given by the Health Department to slow the spread of this disease in our community.”

As of this Thursday there were 1,316 confirmed cases of swine flu reported in Milwaukee. MHD expects this number to increase due to continued spread of the disease in the community as well as the department’s continued surveillance and testing for this disease.

Health officials again stressed that people should stay at home if exhibiting any signs of respiratory illness such as fever, cough, or sore throat. Do not go to work or school.

In addition, it’s still extremely important for people to continue good hygiene practices, such as frequent hand-washing and covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.

Two anti-viral drugs, Tamiflu and Relenza, appear to be effective in treating swine flu. Persons who have high fever or a severe cough or difficulty breathing should seek medical attention immediately

Mildly ill individuals should call their doctor to find out if antiviral treatment is needed. If you are only mildly ill, it is better to call your doctor first, as some situations can be managed by phone. Mildly ill individuals should not go to the emergency department unless instructed to do so by your doctor.

Swine flu spreads person to person when a person infected with the flu coughs or sneezes and the uninfected person breathes in the virus. So, even if you don’t feel sick, there are important things you can do to help prevent spread of disease.

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.

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>.