



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Health Department responds to swine flu outbreak

WOODSTOCK – McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) continues to monitor the swine flu outbreak and has taken steps to keep the community informed on the latest developments. A call center has been activated for county residents to obtain information on the swine flu and how they can protect themselves. The phone number is 815-334-4510 (select option 1). Information is available in both English and Spanish. A mailer to McHenry County residents with similar information, including action steps, will be in mailboxes next week.

MCDH has also created a swine flu webpage at www.mcdh.info to provide “real time” access to this changing situation as reported by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). No cases have been reported in McHenry County; nationally, 91 cases have been reported in 10 states. One death, in Texas, has been attributed to swine flu. CDC has established human-to-human transmission among these recent cases. Seasonal flu vaccinations will not prevent illness from the swine flu; no vaccine is currently available.

Locally, MCDH provided 18 mini-grants in 2007 to schools, townships and municipalities to assist in pandemic preparedness efforts. Town hall meetings and newsletters provided the opportunity to discuss family preparedness plans, continuity of operations, and communication/coordination campaigns by these entities in the event of a pandemic. Residents are encouraged to contact their local agencies for preparedness plans close to home.

“Good health habits – washing your hands, covering your cough and staying home when you’re sick – are all ways to protect families from spreading the flu,” said Patrick J. McNulty, MCDH’s Public Health

Administrator. "The public is a key partner in our preparedness response." If you have a cough, fever (greater than 100 degrees), sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue, and have recently traveled to Mexico (or an area with known swine flu cases) and been exposed to someone who is ill, you should see your doctor. Centegra Health System also has a call center in place to address questions about swine flu (877-Centegra or 815-236-8347).

This outbreak is ongoing and additional cases are expected. Access the CDC's webpage at www.cdc.gov/swineflu or call 1-800-CDC-INFO. In Spanish, visit http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/espanol/swine_espanol.htm.