



WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT & COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HEALTH DEPARTMENT MONITORING SWINE FLU SITUATION

JOLIET – Health experts around the world are monitoring swine flu outbreaks that prompted the White House to declare a public health emergency Sunday.

There is currently no vaccine available to combat this emerging flu threat, but the Will County Health Department reminds area residents that sound personal hygiene and social distancing can help to minimize the potential risk. Health Department Executive Director John Cicero emphasized the importance of personal hygiene and staying home when feeling ill shortly after an early Monday staff meeting convened to discuss the ongoing swine flu outbreaks.

“We can’t emphasize enough the importance of frequent hand washing,” Cicero said. “Frequent hand washing with soap and warm water provides protection against a wide range of infectious diseases, including influenza. Washing your hands is especially critical after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.”

Will County Disease Control began monitoring the emerging outbreak late Saturday, a few hours before the White House declared a public health emergency Sunday morning. The Health Department has launched enhanced flu surveillance designed to provide opportunities for quick response should local cases be suspected or confirmed.

Disease Control is consulting with the three area hospitals on a daily basis to help expedite disease reporting. The Health Department is also providing guidance for local schools. Information for the public has been posted on the agency website (www.willcountyhealth.org).

Influenza symptoms include: fatigue, coughing, sneezing, watery eyes, runny nose, and a low-grade fever. Vomiting and diarrhea are generally not associated with seasonal influenza, but may be present in swine flu cases. Persons with influenza symptoms are urged to consult a health care provider.



Public Health
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“It’s important to emphasize that people who feel ill should stay home until the illness subsides completely,” Cicero said. “They should consult a physician or health care provider about symptoms.

“Since there is currently no vaccine available to combat this newly-developed influenza strain, washing your hands and avoiding contact with sick people is especially important. Medications that may be useful in terms of fighting the illness are currently available only through a health care provider. The public will be notified immediately if that changes.”

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers may be used when soap and water are not available for hand washing. The Health Department urges parents to emphasize the importance of frequent hand washing to children.

For more information about swine flu, visit www.willcountyhealth.org or www.cdc.gov/swineflu.