



WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
&
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

For Immediate Release

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WILL COUNTY H₁N₁ CASES EXCEED 100 - HEALTH DEPARTMENT STRESSES CAUTION AMONG HIGH-RISK GROUPS

JOLIET – Will County's H1N1 case count reached 102 with the addition of four new confirmations early Thursday.

According to Will County Infectious Disease Control, 52 local cases have been confirmed since May 21. The updated totals include 42 cases from Joliet, 13 from Naperville, 12 from Bolingbrook, and 9 from Plainfield. More than 76 percent of the local confirmations involve persons younger than 18 years of age. The average age is 15 years and the age range is 1 to 82 years.

Although most of the novel H₁N₁ cases reported to date are not especially virulent, the Will County Health Department urges individuals with underlying health problems to consult a health care professional quickly if flu-like symptoms should occur. Symptoms of H₁N₁ Influenza include: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Diarrhea and vomiting are less frequently reported, but may also be present.

“Serious influenza complications most often occur among the elderly and the very young,” Health Department Executive Director John Cicero said. “Pregnant women are also susceptible to complications, as well as individuals with chronic heart, lung, kidney, or liver problems. Children receiving long-term aspirin therapy and anyone with compromised immunity face an increased risk from influenza complications.”

The local, state, national, and international incidence of novel H₁N₁ infections shows no signs of waning. Through June 10, 22 Illinois jurisdictions had reported 1,929 H₁N₁ cases, including 101 since June 8. More than 13,200 U.S. cases (including 27 fatalities), had been confirmed.

The World Health Organization declared the first global flu pandemic since 1968 early Thursday, in the wake of nearly 28,000 case confirmations reported from 74 countries. An outbreak is classified as a pandemic when disease transmission between humans becomes widespread in at least two regions of the world.

“The move to Phase 6 really doesn't mean anything with respect to the severity of the novel H₁N₁ virus,” Cicero said. “Moving to Phase 6 is simply an acknowledgment that the virus continues to spread in areas other than the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. This H₁N₁ strain hasn't been especially deadly so far, but its ability to spread to different regions of the world meets the existing criteria for proclaiming a pandemic.”



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The Health Department urges area residents to remember that frequent hand washing with soap and warm water can help to minimize the potential for influenza transmission. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are an acceptable option when soap and water are unavailable.

You can also help to prevent disease transmission by covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Stay home if flu-like symptoms are present.

For more information about H₁N₁ Influenza, visit www.willcountyhealth.org, www.idph.state.il.us, or www.cdc.gov/swineflu.