

2009 H1N1 (formerly known as Swine Flu) Outbreak

Information regarding the Federal government's declaration of a Public Health Emergency due to the recent H1N1 Swine Influenza outbreak –April 2009

April 29, 2009 -- current level of influenza pandemic alert Phase 5. Phase 5 is characterized by human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries in one WHO region. While most countries will not be affected at this stage, the declaration of Phase 5 is a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalize the organization, communication, and implementation of the planned mitigation measures is short. Source and Updates available at: <http://www.who.int/en/>

NOTES FOR UTILITIES

All utilities should review their pandemic planning procedures and business continuity / continuity of operations procedures. Utilities should contact their local, county, or state health officials for area-specific information.

Utility managers should be considering issues such as the maintenance of vital operations in the event of a decreased workforce. According to the Department of Labor, up to 40% of the workforce could be affected by an influenza pandemic. Employees may be sick, caring for sick family members, taking care of children if schools and day care centers are closed, or simply afraid to go to work. Shipments of vital supplies may be delayed or cancelled altogether. Source: WaterISAC Pro Weekly, April 29, 2009

AWWA notes that the disease must be transmitted through person-to-person contact or contact with a contaminated surface. Water that has been treated through conventional disinfection processes does not pose a risk, even if the source water has previously come into contact with infected people or animals. This means that utilities practicing disinfection can assure their customers that treated water coming from the taps in homes and businesses is safe to drink. Source: AWWA Streamlines – April 28, 2009

Supporting the efforts of the media and the public health community on how to prevent the spread of the disease, AWWA has developed [information aimed at water consumers at Drinktap.org](#), with links to the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) information on this topic. The CDC has created multiple sites with information on symptoms, traveling and other topics regarding swine flu: [CDC Key Facts About Swine Influenza](#), [CDC Advisory on Travel Precautions](#) and [Avian Influenza: Is There a Risk to Water Supplies — from the Australian Research Center for Water Quality and Treatment](#). Source: AWWA Streamlines – April 28, 2009

Water Quality, Safety Not Affected by H1N1 Flu: Influenza viruses, including swine flu, are effectively removed from water by filtration and disinfection. "Because Influenza viruses, including swine influenza A (H1N1), are more susceptible to disinfection than most enteric viruses (like Poliovirus, Hepatitis A, or Norovirus), and the influenza viruses are slightly larger and more effectively removed by filtration, current drinking water treatment barriers provide a high degree of protection" said Dr. Mark LeChevallier,

director of Innovation & Environmental Stewardship for American Water. Sources:
<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/147937.php> and
<http://www.wateronline.com/article.mvc/Water-Quality-Is-Not-Impacted-By-Swine-Flu-0001>

H1N1 and other influenza viruses are easily disrupted by standard water treatment processes. The USDA and EPA have concluded that free chlorine levels typically used in drinking water treatment are effective at deactivating the virus at temperatures as low as 5° Centigrade.

Web Resources and Links

Pandemic Influenza Guide for Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources on the web at:

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/cikrpandemicinfluenzaguide.pdf>

The following link is to Swine Flu information at the CDC site:

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/whatsnew.htm> or

CDC Emergency on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/cdcemergency>.

Interim Recommendations on the use of face masks in certain settings --

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/masks.htm>

<http://www.epa.gov/avianflu/faq.htm>

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/> See Workplace Planning

Top 10 List Pandemic and Natural Disasters Notebook and other resources by the New England Drinking Water Program, <http://www.epa.gov/ne/eco/drinkwater/>

Federal Occupational Health, DHHS, has distributed an informational update on the Swine Flu – April 27, 2009

H1N1 or Swine Flu Background

What is swine flu?

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

Are there human infections with swine flu in the U.S.?

In late March and early April 2009, cases of human infection with swine influenza A (H1N1) viruses were first reported in Southern California and near San Antonio, Texas. Other U.S. states have reported cases of swine flu infection in humans and cases have been reported internationally as well. An updated case count of confirmed swine flu infections in the United States is kept at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm> CDC and local and state health agencies are working together to investigate this situation.

(Courtesy of CDC website)

GUIDANCES & RESOURCES from DHS

National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Implementation Plan

Pandemic Influenza Planning Webinar for Water Sector

Business Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Guide for Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources

Additional Information

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) has a new H1N1 influenza information page at: www.mwcog.org/services/health/influenza/