

NH Department of Health and Human Services
129 Pleasant Street – Hugh Gallen State Office Park
Concord, NH 03301



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CONTACT
Public Information Office
603-271-4051

DHHS Announces Swine Flu Public Inquiry Line

Concord, NH – In response to the international outbreak of a new strain of swine influenza (flu) in humans, Governor John Lynch has established a telephone inquiry line for the public. People who have questions about the outbreak, possible symptoms, travel information or other issues related to this illness can call 1-888-330-6764 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. daily beginning today.

As of right now there are no human cases of swine flu in New Hampshire or New England. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) continues to monitor the situation and the Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) is continuing active surveillance for any possible cases. There have been 40 cases identified nationally so far, and these numbers are expected to change daily as the outbreak continues.

“We are proactively reaching out to all of our partners and the public to coordinate this response and keep everyone informed,” said DHHS Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas. “At this point we are encouraging everyone to take common sense preventive measure to avoid becoming sick with this or any other illness and to prevent spreading it to others. These steps include washing your hands frequently, covering your mouth with your sleeve when you cough or sneeze, and also critically important staying home from work or school if you are sick.”

The symptoms of swine flu are similar to seasonal influenza, including fever, sore throat, cough, stuffy nose, chills, headache and muscle aches, and fatigue. Some patients have also reported diarrhea and vomiting and severe illness, including pneumonia and death, have been reported as well.

“Since this is a new virus, there is no vaccine available at this time, which is why these preventive steps are so important,” said Dr. José Montero, Director of Public Health at DHHS.

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“We understand that people may be concerned, but I want to emphasize that these precautionary measures will go a long way toward limiting disease, that there are antiviral medications available to treat anyone who may become ill, and that there have been no cases identified in New Hampshire so far.”

For more information on swine flu, visit www.dhhs.nh.gov or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/swineflu.

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