



JONATHAN E. FIELDING, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

JONATHAN E. FREEDMAN
Chief Deputy

313 North Figueroa Street, Room 806
Los Angeles, California 90012
TEL (213) 240-8117 • FAX (213) 975-1273

www.lapublichealth.org



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April 24, 2009

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *[Signature]*
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **SWINE INFLUENZA**

This is to inform your Board that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed 8 cases of swine influenza, of which 6 are in San Diego and Imperial counties and 2 cases are in Texas. These cases were caused by a strain of influenza that has not been previously reported among swine or humans in the United States. None of the cases infected had any contact with pigs. Limited person to person transmission has been observed among those infected. All affected individuals are recovering. To date, no cases of the virus have been detected in Los Angeles County.

The Mexican government has also reported an outbreak of swine flu. Media reports suggest that some people have died and a total of more than 900 have fallen ill. The CDC has confirmed that the swine influenza in Mexico is of the same strain found in San Diego and Imperial counties.

Background

Swine influenza is a respiratory disease of pigs that is a common cause of outbreaks of type A influenza among pigs. Although swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans, sporadic human infections with swine flu do occur. Human cases of swine influenza usually occur among people with direct exposure to pigs. Swine flu is treatable with antiviral medication. The CDC receives reports of approximately one human swine influenza virus infection every one to two years in the U.S.

Public Health Response

Although there have been no cases diagnosed in Los Angeles County, the Department of Public Health (DPH) is working with the California Department of Public Health, the CDC, and other Southern California health departments to increase surveillance activities and response capabilities. Among the activities are:

- Alerting hospital laboratories to send isolates to the Public Health Laboratory;
- Alerting physicians through the Los Angeles County Medical Association and Health Alert Network to report cases of influenza to DPH for further investigation;
- Alerting schools to report increased absenteeism or clusters of respiratory illness;
- Preparing and distributing educational materials and facts sheets to educate health providers and the public on swine flu and preventive measures;
- Intensify DPH's syndromic surveillance activities with the health care system; and
- Undertake epidemiological investigation of any cases identified as infected by this new influenza strain.

With respect to travel, the CDC has not issued any domestic or international travel restrictions, but is urging travelers to use caution and practice preventive measures to minimize communicability of respiratory viruses.

Your Board will be updated as additional information becomes available. In the meantime, should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me.

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c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors