

Three Cases of Novel H1N1 Flu Confirmed in Henderson County

June 17, 2009

Henderson County Department of Public Health officials announced that there are three confirmed cases of Novel H1N1 flu from a local summer residential camp. Sick campers are being treated and cared for at the camp. No campers have been hospitalized. Health officials are working closely with the camp to reduce the spread of the infection to others. "The camp has already isolated those who are confirmed and treated them with antiviral medications. They are monitoring each of the staff and campers daily for signs and symptoms of influenza like illness," said Linda Weldon, RN, communicable disease supervisor at the health department.

Weldon stated that other local camps have reported influenza like illness as well, and are also monitoring staff and campers. "The camp administrators at all camps have been very cooperative in implementing appropriate infection control measures for staff and campers." In response to the confirmed case, camp officials are following the CDC Interim Guidance on Day and Residential Camps which includes evaluation of staff and campers who may have been exposed to those with the flu.

Henderson County has 22 residential camps. Weldon advised that children who are experiencing influenza like illness such as cough, sore throat, and fever of 100 or greater should not go to camp. Parents should monitor the child a day or so before leaving for camp and only let their child attend if he or she is free of flu symptoms. "For children at camp, it is important for camp staff to monitor campers and staff members daily and isolate anyone with symptoms. This information has been sent to all Henderson County residential camps," stated Weldon. "Parents should also monitor children returning from camp and notify the child's physician if the child exhibits symptoms."

Over 35,000 cases of Novel H1N1 have been reported worldwide. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is reporting 17,855 cases in the US and 44 deaths. There have been 108 cases in North Carolina and no deaths. These are the first confirmed cases of Novel H1N1 virus in Henderson County.

On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization raised the worldwide pandemic alert level to Phase 6 in response to the ongoing global spread of the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus. The WHO designation of a pandemic alert Phase 6 reflects the fact that there are now ongoing community level outbreaks in multiple parts of world. WHO's decision to raise the pandemic

alert level to Phase 6 is a reflection of the spread of the virus, not the severity of illness caused by the virus.

More than 70 countries are now reporting cases of human infection with novel H1N1 flu. This number has been increasing over the past few weeks, but many of the cases reportedly had links to travel or were localized outbreaks without community spread.

H1N1 virus is a respiratory infection caused by an influenza type A virus. The symptoms of Novel H1N1 flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include:

- fever of 100 degrees F or greater **AND**
- cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills or fatigue.
- Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with novel H1N1 flu.

If someone has symptoms they should stay home from work or school to avoid infecting others. Symptoms develop 1 – 3 days after exposure to someone who is sick and they are considered contagious for 7-10 days.

To reduce the risk of getting the flu, avoid contact with ill persons; when you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve (if you do not have a tissue) and throw used tissues in a trash can; after you cough or sneeze, wash your hands with soap and water, or use an alcohol based hand gel; and if you think you are ill with flu, avoid close contact with others as much as possible. Health officials suggest staying home if you're sick and seeking medical care if you are severely ill, such as having trouble breathing. There are also antiviral medications for treatment of H1N1 Flu that a doctor can prescribe.

For general information about H1N1 Flu, call the NC Department of Health and Human Services' Care-Line at 1-800-662-7030 (English/Spanish) or 1-877-452-2514 (TTY) or see state websites www.ncpublichealth.com or www.ncpanflu.gov or see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/> .

###