

## Swine Flu Update – May 4, 2009

**Summary:** The Bristol-Burlington Health District continues to participate in daily briefings with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) about the expanding outbreak of swine flu (H1N1). The goal remains the same: to reduce transmission, illness and death. In other words, decrease the spread of the disease and treat the symptoms. Every day we learn more about the virus and how best to respond to the outbreak.

**Current Status:** As of 11:00 a.m. today (May 4), the CDC has 286 laboratory confirmed cases of H1N1 flu infection. There has been one death and thirty hospitalizations. At this time, there are two confirmed cases of the H1N1 virus in Connecticut. Neither person was a Bristol or Burlington resident.

**Laboratory Results:** Due to the heavy volume, it is unlikely that the federal and state laboratories will be able to quickly process the cultures that have been submitted to them. Federal, state and local public health professionals are now transitioning to a reporting system similar to the one used for seasonal flu. *It is interesting to note that the laboratories are finding that cultures are positive for seasonal influenza and that the numbers are increasing. This is possibly due to an increase in the number of specimens being collected.*

**Recommendations:** The recommendations remain the same – wash your hands, cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and stay away from others who are sick. People who are sick with flu like symptoms need to stay home from work or school for seven days after symptoms begin or until they have been symptom-free to 48 hours, whichever is longer. This will slow the spread of the outbreak.

**Treatment:** Influenza antiviral medication is available for treatment, though it is currently only recommended for people with severe flu illness or those who are at high risk of complications. (Antiviral medications work differently than vaccines or antibiotics and need to be taken according to a health care provider's directions). Most people will get better by staying home and treating the symptoms. For more information about how to best to take care of yourself or a family member, you should contact your health care provider. If you do not one, you should call 2-1-1 for information about health care facilities in the area.

**Vaccine Production:** Vaccines are a very important part of responding to influenza. While there is no vaccine currently available, the federal government is working with companies on this issue.

**Information:** Please continue to check the following websites for up-to-date information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

Connecticut Department of Public Health: [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph)

Bristol-Burlington Health District: [www.bbhd.org](http://www.bbhd.org)

L. Abrahamson, May 4, 2009 3:30 p.m.