

H1N1 (Swine Flu) Update

May 7, 2009

This daily report is designed to provide you with current information about the swine flu, the NPS role, and how it affects our jobs and lives. For your convenience, this document summarizes both **official** (NPS and other government sources) and **non-official** (media coverage) information. It includes four sections: (1) Overview of Current Situation, (2) NPS Monitoring and Response, (3) Information from Other Official Sources, and (4) Summaries of News (National and Global).

1. Current Situation

The media attention to H1N1 continues to be decreased in intensity. The international count is 1,893 cases in 23 countries, while the CDC is reporting 642 cases with 2 deaths in the United States. The World Health Organization is not recommending any travel restrictions, while CDC continues to recommend no unnecessary travel to Mexico.

2. National Park Service – Monitoring and Response

- Coordinating and communicating with federal health agencies and DOI
- Formed a Servicewide H1N1 Coordination and Response Team, led by the Emergency Services Branch and the Office of Public Health
- Providing daily updates and briefings for NPS senior staff
- Participating in daily CDC briefings with state and county health officials
- Established two websites—intranet and public use—for improving dissemination of information and guidance materials
- Assisting NPS units and regional offices in:
 - developing and/or implementing pandemic flu preparedness or response measures
 - interpreting CDC guidance documents as applicable to NPS employees, visitors, and work settings

3. Information from Other Official Sources

- WHO: As of 16:00 GMT, 6 May 2009, 23 countries have officially reported 1,893 confirmed cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection. Mexico has reported 822 laboratory confirmed human cases of infection, including 29 deaths. The United States has reported 403 laboratory confirmed human cases, including one death.
- The following countries have reported laboratory confirmed cases with no deaths - Austria (1), Canada (165), China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (1), Colombia (1), Costa Rica (1), Denmark (1), El Salvador (2), France (5), Germany (9), Guatemala (1), Ireland (1), Israel (4), Italy (5), Netherlands (1), New Zealand (5), Portugal (1), Republic of Korea (2), Spain (73), Sweden (1), Switzerland (1) and the United Kingdom (28).
- The following table from (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 5/6/09) summarizes the state-by-state breakdown of confirmed cases in the United States. Three new states, Hawaii, Washington and Oklahoma have now reported confirmed cases.

U.S. Human Cases of H1N1 Flu Infection		
<small>(As of May 6, 2009, 11:00 AM ET)</small>		
States	Laboratory confirmed cases	Deaths
Alabama	4	
Arizona	48	
California	67	
Colorado	17	
Connecticut	4	
Delaware	33	
Florida	5	
Georgia	3	
Hawaii	3	
Idaho	1	
Illinois	122	
Indiana	15	
Iowa	1	
Kansas	2	
Kentucky*	2	
Louisiana	7	
Maine	1	
Maryland	4	
Massachusetts	45	
Michigan	8	
Minnesota	1	
Missouri	2	
Nebraska	4	
Nevada	5	
New Hampshire	2	
New Jersey	7	
New Mexico	3	
New York	97	
North Carolina	7	
Ohio	5	
Oklahoma	1	

Oregon	15	
Pennsylvania	1	
Rhode Island	2	
South Carolina	16	
Tennessee	2	
Texas	61	2
Utah	1	
Virginia	3	
Washington	9	
Wisconsin	6	
TOTAL (41)	642 cases	2 deaths
May 6, 2009 confirmed cases	TOTAL (38)	403 cases
		1 death
International Human Cases of Swine Flu Infection See: World Health Organization		
*Case is resident of KY but currently hospitalized in GA.		

4. Media Coverage

Worldwide Update:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) Tuesday praised Mexico's professionalism, responsibility and transparency in handling the A/H1N1 flu outbreak. The experience of Mexico would be essential for the international community, said Philippe Lamy, WHO representative in Mexico, when meeting with Mexican President Felipe Calderon. (Xinhua, 5/6/2009)
- WHO continues to monitor the spread of H1N1 and is considering whether raising the alert level to the highest level, Phase 6, is appropriate. "It is a judgment call," one WHO official said when asked about whether the global alert needs to hit its top rung. "Under the rules, just one country outside the Americas needs to have a community-level outbreak of the new strain to trigger a Phase 6 designation indicating a global pandemic is under way." Chan has sought to prepare the public for the declaration of a full pandemic of H1N1, which is widely known as "swine flu" and also contains pieces of human and bird viruses. "Level 6 does not mean, in any way, that we are facing the end of the world," she told the Spanish daily El Pais this week. She stressed that the alert ladder indicates how likely the virus is to spread around the world, not how dangerous it is. WHO's recommendations about how to respond to a pandemic are virtually the same for alert levels 5 and 6. (Reuters 5/7/09)
- WHO started distributing 2.4 million doses of a common anti-viral drug to 72 nations. (CNN, 5/4/09)
- But the WHO has warned against complacency. WHO Chief Margaret Chan said the real test would come when the winter influenza season hits countries. "We hope the virus fizzles out, because if it doesn't we are heading for a big outbreak," she told the UK's Financial Times. (BBC, 5/4/09)
- WHO is discussing various plans on how to increase production of an H1N1 vaccine. "The organization will hold a May 14 teleconference to discuss whether to recommend that drug manufacturers undertake

large-scale production of a vaccine when one is developed,” Marie-Paule Kieny, director of the WHO's initiative for vaccine research, said Wednesday. The group also will offer guidance on whether the organization should advise drug manufacturers to stop making a vaccine for the seasonal flu to allow greater production of the vaccine. (CNN 5/7/09)

- High Schools and universities in Mexico are reopening today. Government-mandated "filter" teams, composed of parent volunteers and school officials, will check the returning students for any respiratory ailments. "If the least suspicion exists, the boy or girl can't remain and the Health Department will be notified," Cecilia Landerreche Gomez Morin, director-general of Mexico's Family Welfare Agency, announced Wednesday. (AP 5/7/09)

US Update:

- The U.S. government on Tuesday said it was no longer necessary to close schools due to outbreaks of the H1N1 flu virus, although students who fall ill should remain at home for at least a week. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said the new guidance, which affects more than 700 schools around the country shut due to suspected flu cases, was issued as health experts lower their assessment of the severity of the outbreak. (Reuters, 5/5/2009)
- CDC has sent diagnostic testing kits to all 50 states that allow the states to complete H1N1 confirmation testing without submitting the samples to CDC. This action is expected to result in a rapid jump in the number of confirmed cases in the U.S. in the near future. While this will result in a more accurate picture of the full scope of the disease in the U.S., it is important to understand that it does not indicate a sudden increase in H1N1 transmission but simply is catching up on the back log of testing.
- States may soon be transitioning to a more traditional seasonal flu type monitoring system where each individual case is not counted but activity levels will be monitored through the traditional sentinel seasonal flu testing sites.
- There has been some discussion about the idea of treating H1N1 like Chicken Pox and having "Pox Parties." This is NOT recommended. "It seems logical: Why not try to get sick with swine flu now, and get some immunity in case it comes roaring back this fall in a deadlier form? Sort of like those "pox parties" to get your kids exposed to a childhood disease. Bad idea, flu experts say. It's too risky. It's true that once your body has encountered a particular virus strain, it is generally better able to fight it off later on. Vaccines work by masquerading as germs, priming the immune system to attack particular bugs. The current swine flu appears no deadlier than ordinary flu, but scientists worry that it could return in a more lethal form during the regular flu season in fall and winter. That's what happened in the deadly pandemic of 1918, and there's evidence that people who got sick earlier that year had protection when the lethal wave came. So wouldn't it be a good idea to get sick now? "I understand the logic (but it) leads you astray," said Dr. William Schaffner, a flu expert at Vanderbilt University. He said there's no way to predict how bad a case of flu will be in a particular person. Given the risk of life-threatening complications, "this is not something where you want to do a biological experiment," he said. "You can't control the infection that you're going to get, and you may be the one, or your child may be the one, that gets a severe infection." What's more, a person who decides to get sick can accidentally pass it along to other, more vulnerable people, even before any symptoms show up, he said. But humans have never encountered this virus, and there is no immunity to it. Even if the swine flu stays mild, "everyone's susceptible," said Andrew Pekosz, who studies the flu at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. (Baltimore Sun, 5/6/2009)(AP 5/6/09) (Emphasis added by NPS OPH)
- An ordinary flu season kills 36,000 in the U.S. each year, hospitalizing hundreds of thousands and sickening millions. Those figures are based upon an illness that many people are immune to, either through annual vaccination or through immunity acquired by getting the flu in a previous winter.