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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SWINE FLU HEALTH ALERT

San Bernardino. There have been four confirmed human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection in San Diego County and two cases in Imperial County, California. An additional two cases were identified in San Antonio, Texas. Internationally, human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection have been identified in Mexico. There are no known links between these patients, no known common exposures and no known pig exposure. Four patients had self-limited influenza-like illness; one patient with underlying autoimmune disease was hospitalized. The ages ranged from 7 to 54 years old. All have recovered.

Investigations are ongoing to determine the source of the infection and whether additional people have been infected with similar swine influenza viruses. The viruses from the eight cases are closely related genetically and contain a unique combination of gene segments that have not previously been reported in the United States or elsewhere.

“No cases of this virus have been identified in San Bernardino County at this time,” stated Health Officer Maxwell Ohikhuare, M.D., with the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health. The Department is conducting enhanced surveillance of health care providers in the County to identify potential human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection, and will be sending them a health alert with clinician guidelines. The Department Emergency Operation Center has also been activated at a level one to more closely monitor developments during regular business hours.

Swine influenza (swine flu) is a common respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus, typically H1N1 and H3N2 strains. Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans. Occasional human infections with swine flu do occur, but usually in persons with direct exposure to pigs. It has not been determined how easily this virus spreads between people. The current situation in California suggests that human to human transmission may be occurring. You can not get the infection from eating pork or any products made with pork.

Seasonal human influenza vaccine usually does not protect against swine influenza A H1N1 viruses, which is a very different strain. Since there is no vaccine available at this time, Dr. Ohikhuare recommends that people take the following normal precautions to prevent the spread of disease to others:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

People who develop an illness with fever and respiratory symptoms, such as cough and runny nose, and possibly other symptoms, such as body aches, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, should contact their health care provider. These medical professionals will decide if influenza testing is needed.

The Department will continue to closely monitor the situation and will provide more information to the public, as needed. For more details on swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection, go to the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov/flu/swine](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine), or call 1-800-CDC-INFO. You can also go to the California Department of Public Health website at [www.cdph.ca.gov](http://www.cdph.ca.gov).

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