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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SWINE FLU HEALTH ADVISORY

San Bernardino. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today proclaimed a State of Emergency that will support and facilitate the California Department of Public Health’s response to this outbreak. While there is no need for alarm, it is the Governor’s top priority to limit the swine flu’s spread as quickly and effectively as possible.

“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 addressing the situation by opening the Department Operation Center during regular business hours to more closely monitor response activities, increasing disease surveillance, sending guidelines for testing and treatment to health care providers, testing laboratory specimens, and providing public information.

There has been no change in the number of confirmed cases in CA since yesterday. Currently there are eleven confirmed human cases of Swine Influenza A (H1N1) virus infection in San Diego, Imperial, and Sacramento Counties in California. An additional fifty-three cases have been confirmed in five states in the U.S., including New York, Ohio, Kansas, and Texas. There are no known links between these patients, no known common exposures and no known pig exposure. The ages ranged from 7 to 54 years old. Their illness has been mild and all have recovered.

Human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection were initially identified in Mexico which has reported more severe illness, including deaths. Other nations around the world are also reporting cases of the virus.

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.
- It is not necessary to wear a mask unless you are in close contact with someone who has been confirmed to have Swine Influenza A virus infection.

Symptoms of swine flu are similar to common seasonal flu, including fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported vomiting or diarrhea associated with swine flu. The public should contact their health care provider for medical attention, if they have a fever of 100°F or more, a cough and/or sore throat. The Department of Public Health clinics does not provide medical care for swine flu.

People with influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

The use of an anti-viral medication such as Tamiflu is generally not recommended for people with mild flu-like illness. It is only effective if taken within 2 days of symptom onset. Health care providers will decide to prescribe this drug on a case-by-case basis.

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, call the County Department of Public Health at 1-800-782-4264. You can also access the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov/flu/swine or call 1-800-CDC-INFO. Further information is available from the California Department of Public Health website at www.cdph.ca.gov.

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