



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**News Release**

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GOVERNOR

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ISSUES MEDICAL ALERT TO PHYSICIANS  
AND ADVISES PUBLIC TO TAKE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES**

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) today issued a medical alert to physicians statewide urging them to be on watch for swine influenza in patients. No cases have been identified in Hawai'i at this time. As of Sunday, at least 40 cases have been confirmed in California, Texas, Kansas, New York, and Ohio by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) with an undetermined number of cases in Mexico nearing the hundreds.

"We are urging doctors to be on alert for any cases of flu-like illness and requesting specimens be collected for additional testing," said Health Director Dr. Chiyome Fukino. Physicians are asked to consider swine influenza in patients with fever and a cough or sore throat and either travel to Mexico or the mainland United States, or contact with persons who had fever and respiratory illness and were in Mexico or the mainland United States within the seven days preceding the start of illness. The department has alerted physicians statewide today, and encourages them to order the PCR testing for influenza from their supporting clinical laboratories. All professional laboratories were alerted to forward specimens that tested positive for flu by PCR to the DOH State Laboratory for sub-typing on Friday.

"Our department has been in motion since we were first alerted by CDC last Friday, and we are receiving regular updates from federal officials," added Health Director Dr. Fukino. "DOH has been participating in national conference calls held last week and over the weekend. Our local public health partners have been alerted, and the Department of Health is actively preparing with

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heightened surveillance as this issue unfolds. While there are no identified cases in Hawaii at this time, the state is prepared to activate its pandemic preparedness plan that has been diligently developed over the last few years.”

Symptoms of swine flu in humans are similar to the symptoms of seasonal influenza and include: fever greater than 100 degrees, headache, body aches, coughing, sore throat, respiratory congestion, and additionally in some cases, diarrhea and vomiting.

In keeping with the CDC travel advisory (<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentSwineFluTravel.aspx>), anyone planning travel to Mexico or areas of the U.S. with swine influenza cases are advised to take the following precautionary measures.

While in areas with confirmed cases:

- Avoid close contact (< 6 feet) with persons who are coughing or otherwise appear ill.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wash hands often, or use alcohol-containing hand sanitizer gel.

Upon return from travel to affected areas:

- Monitor self and travel companions for symptoms of fever and sore throat, cough, or trouble breathing.
- If symptoms of illness develop within 7 days of travel return, contact your healthcare provider as soon as possible.
  - Be sure to tell your healthcare provider your symptoms, where and when you traveled, and whether you had close contact with any sick persons or animals
  - Ask your provider about testing for influenza.
  - Stay home from work, school, group gatherings, and public places for 7 days or until you are feeling completely well to avoid making others ill. You can refer to the DOH website at [hawaii.gov/health/fluguidelines.pdf](http://hawaii.gov/health/fluguidelines.pdf) or the CDC website at [http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance\\_homecare.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance_homecare.htm) for helpful advice for home management of your symptoms.

Persons who are well can do many things now to stay healthy.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

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DOH issues medical alert to physicians and advises public to take precautionary measures

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid contact with sick people.

Swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by consumption of food, and a person cannot get swine influenza from eating pork products. The infections appear to be spread from person-to-person.

The DOH is receiving frequent updates from CDC and is working closely with physician, hospitals, and laboratories statewide to monitor the situation and follow up on any possible cases.

For more information go to [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu).

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