

From: Mollie Melbourne [mailto:mmelbourne@NACHC.COM]
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Subject: A few resources

Hi all,

As many of you are probably aware, there is an outbreak of swine flu in Mexico and 8 people in the US have been confirmed to have this same infection. In case you haven't followed it, here is a brief summary (source - CBN):

According to the WHO, the Government of Mexico reports that the number of cases of influenza-like illness (ILI), which they have been detecting since March 18, has increased steadily. At this time, Mexico is reporting 3 separate outbreaks of ILI, which includes pneumonia:

- In Mexico City, 854 cases of pneumonia have been reported, of those, 59 have died.
- In San Luis Potosi in Central Mexico, 24 cases of ILI and 3 deaths have been reported.
- In Mexicali, near the border of the U.S., 4 cases of ILI and no deaths have been reported.

(MM note: a number of reports have indicated that many of those infected are healthcare workers)

In conference calls over the past 2 days, CDC has also confirmed the following:

- U.S. illnesses occurred between the end of March and mid-April 2009 in Southern California (Imperial and San Diego counties) and Texas (San Antonio).
- U.S. patients range in age from 7 to 54 years.
- The sole patient hospitalized in the U.S. was an immunosuppressed adult woman suffering from autoimmune hepatitis.
- All 8 U.S. patients have recovered.
- Antiviral treatment was provided to 1 U.S. patient.
- No exposure to swine or poultry has been identified in any of the 8 U.S. cases.
- The incubation period is estimated to be 1 to 7 days.
- Epidemiological linkages have been established for 2 pairs of patients: 2 cases in California occurred in a father/daughter pair, and 2 cases in Texas occurred in 16 year old boys who attended the same school.
- Nausea and diarrhea are common clinical features in the U.S. cases.
- Only 1 of the 8 U.S. patients was vaccinated for seasonal influenza, and preliminary immunologic studies have not shown substantial protection with the current seasonal influenza vaccine.
- As with any novel influenza virus, the CDC is creating from the U.S. swine influenza virus a seed strain that may be considered a potential candidate for an influenza vaccine.
- Disease appears to be more severe in cases occurring in Mexico. The cause of the apparent disparity in the severity of illness is not known.
- At this time, the U.S. is not issuing travel restrictions. The CDC will issue a travelers outbreak alert that will contain basic precautionary guidance (i.e., hand washing, respiratory etiquette).
- The WHO has not made any change to the pandemic alert status, which continues to be at stage 3.

There is no way to tell if this situation will progress into a more serious one but we should use the awareness to further our planning for a large scale outbreak. Now is a good time to be sure that the health centers in your state are monitoring the health alert network communiqués from the state or local health departments, have contacted their local health departments, are clear on what symptoms/thresholds are considered influenza like illness (ILI), and what the reporting and testing protocols are for their state. In addition, health centers may want to consider tracking ILI (if they aren't already doing so) and implementing signage and mask use for symptomatic patients. Again, we don't know if the swine flu outbreak will get worse but the attention focused on it serves as a reminder that we must remain vigilant.

Best,

Mollie

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