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**Subject:** News Release: State officials closely monitor human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1)

*The ISDH sent out this news release statewide to the media this evening:*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 26, 2009**

## **STATE OFFICIALS CLOSELY MONITOR HUMAN CASES OF SWINE INFLUENZA A (H1N1)**

INDIANAPOLIS---The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS) are closely monitoring human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection identified in the United States.

In addition to intensifying surveillance among flu sentinel physicians in the state, the Indiana State Department of Health has also sent information out to public health workers over the Indiana Health Alert Network and will share with physicians the interim guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The IDHS is urging public safety professionals, including paramedics, EMTs, police officers, firefighters, and emergency management workers, to take necessary precautions to safeguard their health as they interact and preserve the safety of the public.

"It's too early to be classified as a pandemic," said Joe Wainscott, executive director of the IDHS. "Each of us can make a difference. Limiting contact with others can help slow the spread of illness. Together, we can help protect ourselves, our families, and our communities. In most instances of the flu, those suffering can be cared for at home. Be aware, plan ahead, and share with others what you have learned."

"We advise Hoosiers to stay calm and practice normal precautions to avoid influenza and other respiratory diseases. If you have milder symptoms of influenza, we advise you to stay home and contact your health care provider for advice," said State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe M.D.

"This is a novel human virus, which means we do not have a vaccine to prevent it," said Dr. Monroe. "Individuals aged 65 and older or those with chronic diseases and immune deficiencies are at higher risk for severe complications from influenza, including pneumonia. If these individuals have not received the pneumococcal vaccine, they should discuss with their physician getting the vaccine."

The symptoms of influenza in people are expected to be similar to the symptoms of regular human seasonal influenza and include fever, lethargy, lack of appetite and coughing. Some people with swine flu also have reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Dr. Monroe reminds the public to follow basic precautionary measures to prevent the spread of a cold, influenza, or any infectious disease, including:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve, rather than your hands, if a tissue is not available.

- 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.

State health officials note swine influenza viruses are *not* transmitted by food. You cannot get swine influenza from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork and pork products is safe. Cooking pork to an internal temperature of 160°F kills the swine flu virus as it does other bacteria and viruses.

Investigations are ongoing to determine the source of the infection and whether additional people have been infected with similar swine influenza viruses. The CDC is working very closely with state and local officials in affected states, as well as with health officials in Mexico, Canada and the World Health Organization. The CDC has determined this virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, they have not determined how easily the virus spreads between people.

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza virus that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza in pigs. Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans. However, sporadic human infections with swine flu have occurred. Most commonly, these cases occur in persons with direct exposure to pigs.