

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP HEALTH DEPARTMENT

262 South Finley Avenue Basking Ridge, New Jersey 07920 (908) 204-2520 Fax (908) 204-3075

Contact: Lucy A. Forgione, MA, CHES
Health Officer / Health Director
(908) 204-2520

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2009

Novel Swine-origin Influenza A (H1N1) Virus (S-OIV) Update

Bernards TOWNSHIP (June 17, 2009)

On Monday, June 15th, the New Jersey State Department of Health and Senior Services (NJSDHSS) announced the first death associated with the H1N1 virus in a 49 year old Essex County man. Today the NJSDHSS reported a second death from the Novel H1N1 influenza in a Somerset County resident. This individual **did not** reside in Bernards Township, Bernardsville Borough or Peapack and Gladstone Borough. Both individuals had underlying medical conditions.

Influenza in Somerset and Morris County is widespread with the presence of both residual seasonal flu as well as the H1N1 virus. The hospitals continue to test for H1N1 in patients with influenza-like illness requiring hospitalization. To date New Jersey has 367 confirmed cases of N1N1 influenza in 19 counties. There are also 236 probable cases pending confirmatory testing in the state laboratory.

This week some schools in our area have seen higher absenteeism rates than usual for this time of year. Students with influenza-like illness are asked to remain home for 7 days or 24 hours after symptoms disappear, which ever is longer. Due to the mild nature of the influenza, many children recover before the 7 days, yet it is possible for them to shed the virus, which is why the schools are enforcing the 7 day recommendation. This is the guidance received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and NJSDHSS. Parents are asked to have a doctor's note in order for children to return back to school.

The Bernards Township Health Department continues their surveillance activities and to monitor the severity of Influenza A (H1N1) virus outbreak. "It is important for all residents to remain vigilant" said Health Officer, Lucy A. Forgione. "The number of confirmed cases will increase as well as the number of deaths. Residents should consistently practice preventive measures to avoid getting sick. Thorough and frequent hand washing is the best way to slow the spread of illness and to stay healthy. Eating a nutritious diet, exercising and getting enough rest are also important for staying healthy" Forgione said.

While the influenza virus does not live long in the environment, all schools have been asked to institute enhanced cleaning of high touch surfaces. The virus will survive between 2-8 hours after being deposited on a surface. The temporary closing of schools is not considered effective in limiting or preventing the spread of the virus.

It is important for residents to practice preventive measures to avoid getting sick. These include:

- Washing hands frequently and thoroughly for at least 20 seconds.
- Covering coughs and sneezes in your elbow, not with your hands.
- Staying home from work or school if you are sick.

Further information is available from the following resources:

Call Bernards Township Health Department (908) 204-2520
www.bernardshealth.org/flu or check for updates on the Morris County Office of Health Management website, www.morris.health.org or the NJSDHSS www.state.nj.us/health and Center for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/swineflu

The Bernards Township Health Department is a Contractual Health Agency for
Bernards Township, Bernardsville Borough, Chester Borough, Mendham
Borough, Mendham Township, Long Hill Township and Peapack & Gladstone
Borough

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The Bernards Township Health Department continues to work closely with Morris County Office of Health Management and the NJSDHSS to monitor the current H1N1 Influenza A (Swine Flu) outbreak.