

**County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency, Emergency Medical Services**  
**Swine Influenza Update to Prehospital Providers**  
**April 28, 2009**

**Current Swine Flu Situation:**

- According to the CDC, there are 64 confirmed cases of Swine Flu in the United States, with 11 in California. Additionally, there have been confirmed cases in several other states and countries. To receive automatic email updates regarding case counts and investigation updates from the CDC, go to the following website:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm>. Select option on right side of the page.
- Within California, there have been 5 cases in San Diego County, 5 in Imperial County and 1 in Sacramento. For a local press release and video published yesterday, go to <http://www.sdcountry.ca.gov/Portal/news/swineflu.html>.
- The World Health Organization's (WHO) has raised their level of influenza pandemic alert to **Phase 4**, meaning there is sustainable human-to-human spread. For an explanation of the different WHO pandemic influenza phases, refer to [http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/phase/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/phase/en/index.html).
- CDC has recommended that U.S. travelers avoid all non-essential travel to Mexico.

**Strategies for the prevention of the spread of Swine Flu:**

- The most important strategy is washing hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- EMS personnel should request additional information from dispatchers when sent on calls with chief complaints of respiratory, "sick person" and fever related calls, if limited initial information is provided upon dispatch. Questions to ask to determine whether the chief complaint is an Influenza-like Illness (ILI) are:
  1. Have they recently been in Mexico or been exposed to anyone that has been in Mexico?
  2. Do they report having a fever or do they have a fever of greater than 100°F (37.8°C)?
  3. Do they have a cough, sore throat or any other respiratory symptoms?Initial interrogation of the patient from at least 6 feet away should be done to determine if additional personal protective equipment (PPE) is necessary.
- If the person/patient answers "YES" to questions 2 and 3, the patient has an ILI and prehospital personnel, both non-transporting and transporting, should take the following precautions:

1. Wear a fit-tested N95 respirator, disposable gloves, gown and eye protection (face shield or goggles). Before and after contact with the patient, clean hands thoroughly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  2. Place a surgical mask on all patients with suspected symptoms. If O<sub>2</sub> administration is necessary, utilize a non-rebreather O<sub>2</sub> mask.
  3. To reduce the chance of creating aerosolized droplets, avoid the use of nebulizers, suction only when necessary and avoid endotracheal intubation whenever possible. Consider the insertion of a Combitube instead of intubation. Subcutaneous or intramuscular epinephrine should be used for severe shortness of breath due to COPD, asthma and allergic reactions, according to instructions from the Base Hospitals as needed. Albuterol Metered-dose Inhalers (MDI) may be used in lieu of nebulizers for the care of patients with ILI symptoms. Directions in regards to the use of MDIs will be distributed within the next day.
  4. Suspension of CPAP for patients with ILI symptoms.
  5. Upon completion of the call, all equipment that the patient had contact with, or was within 6 feet of, should be thoroughly and properly decontaminated.
- Prehospital personnel are advised to alert receiving hospital personnel of a possible infectious patient.
  - Prehospital personnel are advised to dispose of all PPE utilized in or near the patient's room, taking precaution to not walk around the ED with contaminated PPE.
  - Prehospital personnel exposed to a known swine flu case without adequate PPE should page the EMS Duty Officer at (858) 565-5255.

For further information, please refer to the following:

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

<http://www.emsa.ca.gov>

For any further questions, please contact either Rebecca Pate at [Rebecca.Pate@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Pate@sdcounty.ca.gov) or Susan Smith at [Susan.Smith@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Susan.Smith@sdcounty.ca.gov).