



## St. Mary's County Health Department

### NEWS RELEASE Draft

[www.smchd.org](http://www.smchd.org)

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### **Community Action Team meets; discusses Preparedness, Prevention and Response for Swine Flu Outbreak**

LEONARDTOWN, MD. (May 1, 2009, 1:00 p.m.) – A community action team met yesterday to review the St. Mary's County Emergency Operations Plan for Public Health and Medical Services. The county is currently taking the actions prescribed in the Pre-Event Actions phase of the Plan.

The team, led by Dr. William Icenhower, Health Officer, St. Mary's County, includes John Savich, County Administrator, Dr. Michael Martirano, Superintendent of Schools, David Zylak, Director, Public Safety; Joan Gelrud and John Kees, St. Mary's Hospital and Karen Everett, Public Information Officer.

Governor Martin O'Malley and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) announced yesterday that eight "probable" swine flu cases have been identified in Maryland. The samples were tested at the DHMH State Public Health Laboratories and have been sent to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for further testing. They are from Anne Arundel County (three), Baltimore County (four) and

Montgomery County (one.) All patients are recovering from their illness and none have been hospitalized. Currently, there are no confirmed human cases of swine flu infection in St. Mary's County.

Per the Center for Disease Control, as of 11:00 a.m., there have been 141 reported cases of swine flu in the U.S. The federal Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH), and local health departments are closely monitoring this outbreak.

As part of this pre-event phase, information via handouts, weblinks, news releases and meetings is crucial for effective prevention and preparedness. Maryland has announced a toll-free Swine Flu information line. Residents can call 1-877-MDFLU4U (633-5848) seven days a week or email [swineflu@dnhm.state.md.us](mailto:swineflu@dnhm.state.md.us). The information line will operate between the hours of 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. Monday – Friday and 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Links to the CDC's website have been added to the county's website at [www.stmarysmd.com](http://www.stmarysmd.com) and the St. Mary's County Public Schools at [www.smcps.org](http://www.smcps.org). News releases have been distributed to local media and added to the county's website. The County's Emergency Announcement Line will be periodically updated (301-475-4200, x4911).

Swine flu, like seasonal flu, appears to spread from person to person. The symptoms of swine flu are no different from common seasonal flu. These symptoms could include fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, sore throat and dry cough. Any individual experiencing symptoms is asked to exercise the following common sense precautions to avoid infecting others:

- Wash your hands often, especially after coughing, sneezing, and wiping or blowing the nose. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Use paper tissues when wiping or blowing your nose; throw tissues away after each use. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth to prevent spreading germs.
- Stay away from crowded living and sleeping spaces, if possible.
- Stay home if you are sick, and avoid contact with other people to protect them from catching your illness.
- Limit non-essential travel to affected areas.

You may want to contact your health care provider if:

- You are ill with influenza-like symptoms, including a fever greater or equal to 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8 degrees C), AND you have a cough or sore throat AND you have traveled to an area where there are confirmed cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) within 7 days prior to the onset of your symptoms, or you have had contact with an ill person who fits this travel description.

Maryland's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) is closely monitoring the swine influenza situation and working with the Maryland Department of Education regarding the flu's effect on schools. Parents are urged to have a contingency plan for the care of their children if schools or daycare would need to be closed. Employers are urged to work with their employees in these circumstances, and

to recognize that employees may have extraordinary child care obligations for a period of time.

St. Mary's County Health Department is closely monitoring the swine flu situation, conducting enhanced surveillance activities, and communicating regularly with community, State, and regional partners. Should the medicine be needed, an emerging supply of Tamiflu, a currently effective antiviral medicine, is available within St. Mary's County. The federal government is beginning additional shipments of Tamiflu to all states early next week. For the most up-to-date information about swine flu and number of confirmed laboratory cases of swine flu in the U.S., please see the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention's website at [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu). For up-to-date information on the outbreak in Maryland, visit [www.maryland.gov](http://www.maryland.gov).

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