



News for Immediate Release

Sept. 5, 2011

Novel Influenza-A Cases Linked to County Fair; Pennsylvanians Should Continue Flu Prevention Practices and Report Flu-like Illness

Harrisburg – The Pennsylvania departments of Health and Agriculture today announced three cases of a novel influenza A virus have been identified, and are now linked to an agricultural fair in southwestern Pennsylvania.

The first individual to become ill, announced on Friday, Sept. 2, has fully recovered from the illness. Two other individuals, confirmed ill over the weekend, are recovering. All three are children who reported attending the Washington County Agricultural Fair the week of Aug. 13-20, 2011.

The cases in Pennsylvania are similar to previous, rare human infections with swine-origin H3N2 viruses, but are unique in that they contain a genetic component of the H1N1 virus.

A continuing investigation, which is being jointly undertaken by the departments of Health and Agriculture, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has not yet uncovered how the illness was transmitted to the three individuals. However, no additional human infections with this virus have been identified to date.

Anyone who attended the Washington County Fair and has flu-like symptoms should contact their local health care provider or call 1-877-PA-HEALTH. Symptoms would be similar to that of seasonal influenza, and would include fever, lethargy (extreme tiredness), lack of appetite and coughing. Other influenza symptoms may include a runny nose, sore throat, eye irritation, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

The Department of Health and the CDC are conducting increased surveillance and tracking in southwestern Pennsylvania, as well as setting up informational booths about influenza at agricultural fairs, while Department of Agriculture is continuing with monitoring the health of animals at all exhibitions.

The Department of Health continues to urge the public to take everyday precautions to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, while the Department of Agriculture reminds residents to remember to wash your hands after coming into contact with animals at fairs and in other public venues.

“We’re not telling people to avoid public venues or fairs,” said Pennsylvania DOH Secretary Dr. Eli Avila. “But, until we complete our investigation, we want to make sure that the public is aware and is taking the proper precautions to protect their health.”

Everyday preventative actions against influenza include:

- Coughing or sneezing into a tissue, your sleeve or elbow (not your hands);
- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you cough or sneeze, or using an alcohol-based hand cleaner;
- Keeping your hands away from your face – don’t touch your mouth, hands or eyes;
- Keeping frequently used surfaces clean; and
- Staying home from work, school, and social gatherings if you have flu-like and feverish symptoms to help prevent others from catching your illness.

For more information, visit www.health.state.pa.us or call 1-877-PA-HEALTH.

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