



News for Immediate Release

Aug. 31, 2012

Department of Health Reports Additional Cases of New Flu Strain

Harrisburg – The Pennsylvania Department of Health today reported two confirmed cases and one probable human case of influenza due to a new strain of the flu known as H3N2v.

While this strain is typically associated with swine, the Department of Health emphasized that handling or eating pork products presents no risk of exposure to influenza.

The three cases occurred among youth participants in the Somerset County Fair, Aug. 18-25. There are no reported hospitalizations. Although the investigation is ongoing, there is no evidence to date of the new flu strain spreading from person-to-person in Pennsylvania.

This is the same virus that recently caused illness in association with the Huntingdon County Fair that took place earlier in August. Nationwide, a total of 288 cases have been confirmed. The illnesses reported in Pennsylvania are also mostly in children and are typical for the flu.

The Department of Health advised that fair attendees should wash their hands after visiting areas with live animals and avoid carrying food or drink or putting things in their mouth while in these areas.

People at high risk of influenza complications should use caution and should avoid areas where live pigs are displayed. Those at high risk include:

- Children less than 5 years of age;
- People 65 years of age and above;
- Pregnant women; and
- People with certain chronic medical conditions or weakened immune systems.

Symptoms of the H3N2v flu are similar to that of seasonal influenza, and would include fever, coughing, fatigue, and lack of appetite. Other influenza symptoms may include a runny nose, sore throat, muscle aches, eye irritation, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Anyone with flu-like illness who has been in contact with live animals including pigs at agricultural fairs or on farms in the week before they got sick should contact their healthcare providers, their local health department, or the Pennsylvania Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH for advice and appropriate follow-up.

Flu viruses are mainly spread through the air from coughs and sneezes. Again, the Department of Health emphasized that there is no risk of exposure to influenza from handling or eating pork products.

Additional information on H3N2v can be found on the Department of Health web page at www.health.state.pa.us or on the website of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov.

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