



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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CDC certifies Alabama's public health laboratory for novel H1N1 influenza confirmation testing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health has received validation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to perform the testing that confirms probable novel influenza H1N1 cases not previously confirmed by CDC. The health laboratory is in the process of confirming the probable cases which previously had been sent to CDC. In the future, novel H1N1 cases will be confirmed by the state health laboratory in Alabama.

The department announces one additional probable case of novel H1N1 influenza has been identified as of May 12. Alabama has 32 cases, nine of which have been confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The age range of novel H1N1 cases is from 4 to 41, with a median age of 7. Twenty-five of the state's 32 total cases are children under 13 years of age. Of the 24 cases in Madison County, 21 are also children under 13 years of age.

Of all probable and confirmed cases, 24 individuals are residents of Madison County, 4 of Montgomery County, 1 of Jefferson County, 1 of Pike County, 1 of Shelby County, and 1 of Limestone County.

Starting May 12 the department Web site at www.adph.org will be updated each day through May 15 at 3 p.m. with any changes in number of H1N1 influenza cases within the state. In the past two weeks more than 1,000 samples have been submitted to the state health department laboratory to screen for the H1N1 virus. The health department lab has been able to quadruple its capacity to evaluate specimens submitted by the medical community, spending \$160,000 for equipment and supplies.

CDC recommends implementation of measures that focus on keeping all students, faculty and staff with symptoms of influenza out of schools and child care facilities during their period of illness when they are potentially infectious to others.

Students and faculty with influenza-like illness should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care for seven days or 24 hours of being free of

symptoms, whichever period of time is longer. Students or staff who appear to have influenza-like illness at arrival or become ill during a school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.

The Alabama Department of Public Health does not recommend cancelling large group events based on concerns of H1N1 influenza. Individuals should try to curtail the spread of influenza by realizing the virus is circulating in the population. Individuals who are ill should not attend group events to avoid spreading the virus to others. Persons with underlying medical conditions which would put them at greater potential risk are also advised to avoid group events.

Prescription antiviral drugs such as Tamiflu and Relenza provide effective treatment and should be taken within the first 48 hours of illness.

The symptoms of H1N1 influenza are similar to the symptoms of traditional influenza and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 influenza. Close contacts should limit their contact with others for a period of seven days from the time they were exposed.

The incubation period from the moment of exposure to H1N1 influenza until symptoms develop is two to seven days. Individuals are infectious to others one day before until seven days after symptoms develop. Persons who develop symptoms of respiratory illness should contact their medical provider who can arrange for tests to determine whether the disease is due to H1N1 flu.