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JOINT RELEASE

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Two Little Diomed residents medevaced to Nome with possible H1N1**

#### *Other residents of the remote island village experiencing flu-like symptoms*

(Anchorage, AK) — Two Little Diomed residents with severe H1N1 symptoms were medevaced to Nome through a coordinated effort by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Alaska Army National Guard, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, and the Norton Sound Health Corporation. The remote island community is being provided medical support to help prevent and treat additional people with suspected H1N1 infection and to help prevent further transmission.

On Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2009, the Alaska Army National Guard flew both individuals from Little Diomed to Norton Sound Regional Hospital in Nome. One patient tested positive for H1N1 during an initial rapid test.

Diomed Mayor Andrew Miligrock requested that a medical team and medication be sent to the island to treat an increasing number of people with flu-like symptoms.

In response, a civilian medical team consisting of one doctor, one public health nurse, and two medics are being transported to Little Diomed on Thursday, Nov. 5, with transportation support from the Alaska Army National Guard.

“One of the most remote communities in Alaska, the village of Diomed does not have village-wide water or sewer systems,” said state epidemiologist Dr. Joe McLaughlin. “Due to frequent adverse weather conditions, it is not uncommon for this community to be inaccessible by air for long periods of time, which further limits emergency health care opportunities for villagers. For these reasons, the DHSS Section of Epidemiology fully supports this medical mission to interrupt the spread of influenza in this hard-hit and geographically remote Alaska village.”

DHSS has arranged for 130 doses of inactivated H1N1 vaccine, dedicated to Nome, to be redirected to Diomed, along with antivirals used in the treatment of H1N1. Nome supplies are being immediately restocked.

The traditional commercial means of air evacuations from Little Diomed to Nome is not available at this time. In the interim, Alaska Army National Guard stands by to respond to true emergencies.

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