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Media Update

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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May 5 Media Update

Still no confirmed cases of H1N1 (swine) flu in Alaska

- **How many cases of H1N1 (swine) flu have been reported in Alaska?**

As of Tuesday, May 5, there are still no probable or confirmed cases of swine flu in Alaska. To date, no suspected influenza samples have been sent to the CDC in Atlanta for testing.

- **What should my family do to be prepared?**

Families should be prepared to keep sick family members home. That may mean parents missing work to stay home with sick children. Talk to your employer and have a plan in place. Families should have food, water, medications, and other necessities on hand to reduce the need to leave home. Checklists and plans for families, businesses and communities are available on the department preparedness Web page at www.hss.state.ak.us/prepared.

- **Has the response to the outbreak changed?**

The State Department of Health and Social Services H1N1 response is now being organized under the Unified Command System being led by the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management at the State Emergency Coordination Center. The center is activated at its third highest level and is fully staffed. Media can contact the center's public information officer, Jeremy Zidek, at 428-7125. Health and Social Service daily updates will continue until no longer needed.

- **How many courses of antivirals (Tamiflu and Relenza) are available in Alaska?**

The state has approximately 110,000 courses of antiviral medication on hand as part of our ongoing pandemic preparedness efforts. Ten-thousand courses had already been distributed to health-care facilities statewide prior to the current distribution. Additional antiviral medications, along with masks and other medical supplies, are currently being distributed statewide as part of the state's readiness response plan. Photos of the antiviral stockpile taken on May 1 are available on our Web site at www.hss.state.ak.us/press/2009/stockpile.htm

Our primary messages remain:

Health officials recommend following the same advice given for preventing seasonal influenza:

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water.** Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- **Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.** Cough or sneeze into a tissue or inside your elbow. Then wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.
- **Stay home if you are sick.** If you have flu symptoms such as fever, body aches and cough, stay home from work or school and avoid public activities for at least five days (seven for children) to prevent spreading the disease to others.

The department will continue to update its Web site at www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov with state, national and international information about swine flu.

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