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Media Update

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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April 28 Media Update

Still no confirmed cases of swine flu in Alaska

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

As of Tuesday, April 28, there are no confirmed cases of swine flu in Alaska.

- **Is the state distributing its supply of antiviral medications to communities throughout Alaska?**

Yes. The state of Alaska has about 80,000 courses of antiviral medications in a state stockpile at this time. The department had already sent around 10,000 of those courses to 22 acute-care hospitals throughout the state in preparation for a possible flu outbreak. These hospitals are located throughout the state, from the North Slope to Western Alaska to Southeast.

The department plans to begin shipping additional supplies of antiviral medications in the next day or two, with shipments arriving in Alaska communities within the week.

Finally, DHSS has ordered approximately 20,000 additional courses of antiviral medications to be shipped to Alaska from the Strategic National Stockpile. This supply should arrive in about a week.

- **Who will be the first to get these antiviral medications?**

DHSS will work with local governments throughout Alaska to dispense the antiviral medications. The medications will be used primarily for Alaskans who are sick with flu-like symptoms. The medications may also be used to prevent flu in exposed essential personnel. Tamiflu and Relenza are available only with a prescription; they are not sold over-the-counter.

- **If I have not received a flu shot during this flu season, should I get a flu shot now?**

There is no evidence that this year's flu shot offers any protection against swine flu.

- **What can I do to prevent getting swine flu, should it be detected in Alaska?**

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.

- **I have a trip planned to Mexico. Should I go ahead with that trip at this time?**

Federal officials are recommending that people do not travel to Mexico at this time unless absolutely necessary. Alaska DHSS health officials support that travel warning.

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- **Where can I find more information about swine flu and Alaska's response to the public health emergency?**
DHSS will update its Web site <http://www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov/> with state, national and international information about swine flu. This Web site is an ongoing Web site about preparing for pandemic influenza; it is NOT meant to be an announcement that the swine flu cases reported in multiple countries have risen to the level of being called a pandemic.

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