

Kansas Response to World Health Organization Pandemic Declaration

Today's declaration of a flu pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) comes as no surprise to public health officials in Kansas who have been responding to infections with the 2009 H1N1 flu virus across the state for nearly two months.

"The WHO's action today is an important reminder that this entirely new flu virus is still here," said Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, State Health Officer and KDHE Director of Health. "New cases are still occurring in Kansas as we head into summer, and we have every reason to believe that caseloads will escalate when the regular flu season begins sometime in the fall."

WHO, the global public health agency based in Geneva, today elevated the pandemic phase from a level 5 to a level 6, the highest level on its pandemic alert scale. The decision confirms that the first flu pandemic in more than 40 years is underway in at least two continents.

Cases of the novel H1N1 flu have now been confirmed in 74 countries, with widespread community transmission occurring both in North America and Australia. The declaration of a pandemic is only a recognition of the wide geographic spread of the new virus, not an indicator of the severity of the disease it causes.

While the pandemic phase level has been elevated, the Kansas response to the virus will remain the same, Dr. Eberhart-Phillips said. Kansas, in sync with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), responded to cases of H1N1 early on, and health officials are continuing their efforts now to reduce transmission and slow down the spread of the infection.

As of today, KDHE has identified the following cases of the 2009 H1N1 influenza A virus in 15 Kansas counties. In all cases, the local health departments are following the guidance provided by KDHE when dealing with a confirmed case.

Confirmed Cases – 97 total

- Dickinson County – Two cases involving adults
- Douglas County – Two cases involving an adults
- Ford County – One case involving a child
- Geary County – 25 cases total involving nine adults and 16 children
- Gove County – One case involving an adult
- Johnson County – 11 cases total involving four adults and seven children
- Leavenworth County – One case involving a child

- Morton County – Two cases involving adults
- Ottawa County – One case involving a child
- Pottawatomie County – One case involving a child
- Reno County – One case involving an adult
- Riley County – 23 cases total involving 15 adults and eight children
- Saline County – Eight cases total involving one adult and seven children
- Sedgwick County – Three cases involving children
- Wyandotte County – 15 cases total involving two adults and 13 children

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