News Release

April 26, 2009
Alberta on alert for swine influenza
Media Statement

Edmonton... In light of cases of human swine flu reported in Mexico, the U.S. and Canada, Alberta’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. André Corriveau, has put the province’s health system on alert, and is asking Albertans to take precautions against the influenza virus and help stop the spread of infection.

“Although we have no cases of the new influenza strain in Alberta, I have advised all Medical Officers of Health in the province to increase surveillance, and implement protocols to minimize the spread of infection,” said Corriveau. “Alberta and the other provinces and territories are working closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada to monitor for influenza activity related to the new strain reported in Mexico.”

Staff will be taking appropriate steps to prevent the spread of infection to other patients, staff and the public.

“Everyone should take some simple precautions against the influenza virus, and help stop the spread of infection to others,” said Corriveau. “We are asking anyone who develops a fever or cough and has recently returned or had contact with someone recently returned from Mexico or the southern U.S., to call HealthLink Alberta for advice before visiting a physician’s office, medicentre or emergency room. All Albertans should remember to wash hands frequently with soap and warm water.”

Albertans are reminded not to touch their eyes, nose or mouth after touching door handles and other surfaces that may harbour influenza and other viruses. Those with flu-like symptoms can help prevent the spread of illness by not touching surfaces directly, washing their hands frequently, especially after coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose. Other important ways to reduce the spread of influenza and other viruses, include: staying home from work and avoiding public places when ill, and coughing or sneezing into your sleeve rather than your hand.

Anyone with a fever or cough associated with recent travel to Mexico or the southern U.S. can call Health Link Alberta toll-free 1-866-408-LINK (5465); in Edmonton, call 780-408-LINK (5465); in Calgary, call 403-943-LINK (5465).

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