

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KCHD's School Out-of-State Travel Recommendations

Charleston, WV - Dr. Rahul Gupta, Health Officer and Executive Director for the Kanawha-Charleston Health Department (KCHD), would like to outline the Out-of-State Travel Recommendations for local school systems. KCHD strives to keep the residents of Kanawha County informed of the current developments on H1N1 (Swine) Flu and there are currently 403 confirmed cases affecting 38 states and 702 probable cases affecting 44 states.

Dr. Gupta is concerned that students may be exposed to the illness during school-related travel outside of West Virginia into an area that may have cases of the H1N1 virus. Dr. Gupta recommends that all out-of-state school-related travel (field trips, sporting events, etc.) to areas with confirmed or probable cases be suspended until further notice. The purpose of restricting travel is to reduce disease transmission and associated morbidity and mortality during the 2009 H1N1 virus outbreak in the US. We are not recommending that all out-of-state travel be suspended. Instead, we have offered to work with school authorities and provide them the most up-to-date guidance on a case-by-case basis. New cases of H1N1 are being identified across the United States daily and it is impossible to predict where new cases will occur. Therefore, we recommend that if a school trip is being planned to an unaffected out-of-state area, please check the most updated information for that area immediately prior to your departure.

At this time, we have no reason to recommend school closure or cancel in-state school-related activities. Should the situation change and cases be identified in West Virginia or local schools, it may become necessary to take additional precautions to limit the spread of this virus. Schools should continue to promote everyday preventive actions for student and staff on trips including: cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, wash your hands frequently or use alcohol-based hand cleaners, avoid close contact with sick people and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth since germs spread this way. If you get influenza-like illness symptoms, stay home from work or school except to seek medical care and limit contact with others.

As we continue to monitor the situation, we would like the public to understand that this is a rapidly and constantly evolving situation and the current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). West Virginia has no confirmed or probable cases at this time.

For more information that is updated daily, please visit www.kchdvw.org. If you need to speak to someone regarding H1N1 virus call (304) 348-1088. For information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu.

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