

# **Swine Flu/H1N1 Employee Update May 5, 2009**

Seven new specimens from Southwest Georgia are being sent to the state lab for Swine Flu H1N1 testing, Southwest Health District Health Director Dr. Jacqueline Grant said today. Two samples are already at the lab from Southwest Health District.

In all, our district is awaiting results on nine samples from the State Public Health Lab. The state lab will determine whether the samples should be turned over to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for confirmatory testing, Dr. Grant said. The CDC lab is the only facility currently capable of confirming the presence of the Swine Flu H1N1 virus.

Meanwhile, state public health officials announced today that Georgia has confirmed two additional cases of Swine Flu H1N1, bringing the total confirmed cases to four (although one of the cases, a Kentucky woman who fell ill in Georgia, is categorized by the CDC as a Kentucky case rather than a Georgia case.)

"It is important for residents to know that no cases of H1N1 virus have been confirmed in our 14-county district," Dr. Grant said.

As of Tuesday morning, 225 samples from across Georgia had been sent for testing to the state lab, with 149 coming back negative. Of the remainder, 54 are in the process of testing at the state lab. Five cases were already at the CDC, and we are awaiting confirmation on one of them. Some specimens were rejected because of improper handling or shipping. Because there is a backlog of cases for testing, we cannot be sure when we will get back results for the samples from our District.

Of the confirmed cases in Georgia, only the Kentucky woman has required hospitalization. The other confirmed cases include a 14-year-old from Henry County, a 3-year-old from Cobb County, and a 36-year-old pregnant woman from DeKalb County, State Public Health Director Dr. Sandra Ford said today in a press conference in Atlanta.

Southwest District Health is now assisting in the distribution of specimen transportation kits to county health departments and antiviral medications to area hospitals.

Tomorrow (May 6) marks the final N95 fit testing session for Southwest Health District employees. The fit-testing will be at the Dougherty County Health Department from 8:30 a.m. – noon.

Finally, employees will be receiving a “Glove Removal Checklist” from Kitty Bishop, with instructions and access to a video.

The best defense against the infection for now remains the same:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

More information is available from the toll-free information line, 1-888-899-9788, or by going online to [www.southwestgeorgiapublichealth.org](http://www.southwestgeorgiapublichealth.org) or [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/).