



SOUTHWEST PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

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All H1N1 specimens submitted by Southwest Health District are negative

Test results showed no evidence of the Swine Flu H1N1 virus in any specimens sent by the Southwest Health District to the Georgia Public Health Laboratory, Southwest Health District Health Director Dr. Jacqueline Grant said today.

“All results came back negative for H1N1,” Grant said, adding that no specimens from the 14-county District are pending at the state facility. “While this is good news, we should not drop our guard. The disease is continuing to spread worldwide, and we cannot predict what it will do. Public Health will continue to monitor the outbreak. We urge the public to stay informed.”

The number of H1N1 cases confirmed in Georgia remains at four, but the tally of probable cases has climbed to 14, she said. Nationwide, as of Monday at midday, the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 2,618 laboratory-confirmed human infections with novel H1N1 flu in 43 states and the District of Columbia. An additional 704 probable cases have been reported nationwide.

So far, three U.S. deaths have been reported as a result of the outbreak. None have occurred in Georgia.

On Monday, the World Health Organization announced 30 countries have officially reported 4,694 cases of H1N1 infection, including 53 deaths. WHO is holding steady at Pandemic Phase 5, which is one phase less than a full-blown pandemic.

“Bear in mind that an ordinary seasonal flu outbreak claims around 36,000 lives in the U.S. annually,” Grant said. “Influenza is a serious illness. This particular strain of influenza, H1N1, is something we’ve never seen before. We anticipate that there will be more cases, more hospitalizations and more deaths associated with it in the coming days and weeks because the population has little to no immunity against it.”

Baker	Calhoun	Colquitt	Decatur	Dougherty	Early	Grady
Lee	Miller	Mitchell	Seminole	Terrell	Thomas	Worth

There is also no cure, Grant warned. “Researchers are working on a vaccine, but it usually takes around six months to produce one.”

And, while most people infected by the Swine Flu H1N1 virus are experiencing mild illness, that could change.

“Viruses mutate, and this one still has the potential to become a pandemic,” said Grant. “As we learn more about H1N1, guidelines and recommendations will change to reflect our new knowledge. Staying abreast of the latest news is one of the things you can do to protect yourself and your loved ones.”

Other tips to stop the spread of infectious diseases such as the H1N1 virus include:

- 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.

Information on H1N1 is available online at www.southwestgeorgiapublichealth.org and www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/.

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