

THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
H-166, U.S. CAPITOL
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-9086

BRIAN P. MONAHAN, MD, FACP

April 27, 2009

Dear Member and Staff,

The Office of Attending Physician wants to be sure that members of the Congressional Community are fully informed about the current swine influenza outbreak and that they take action to reduce the possibility of its spreading further. The emergence of a new influenza virus, with cases so far found in Mexico, North America and New Zealand, is of concern. The nature of infectious disease outbreaks is one of uncertainty and unpredictability and as such, we expect that the current swine influenza situation will be fluid as more is learned about this new virus. As new information becomes available, it is likely that recommendations will change. Moreover, it is during these early stages of the investigation that new information is found and recommendations likely to be formulated and modified. The Office of Attending Physician, in conjunction with the House and Senate Sergeant-at-Arms, are working together to gather as much information as possible in order to provide timely and reliable advice to the Capitol Hill community.

It is unknown if the current swine influenza strain could trigger a pandemic. However, the potential exists and so it is advisable that individuals, offices and other groups take the time to review their plans for public health emergencies and keep abreast of any new developments in regarding the current situation. This information is meant to educate and is precautionary. The efforts made in recent years to prepare for pandemic influenza could be particularly helpful and offer a starting point for personal and institutional preparedness. In an effort to help update the Congressional community on the current situation, the Office of Attending Physician will maintain regular updates to this website and will maintain links to reliable sources of information such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Please visit these sites or our Health Units in order to obtain further information and answers to questions.

Any Member that has cases of swine influenza confirmed in their district should feel free to contact the OAP medical staff and their local public health officials to get answers to any questions.

If you feel well: There have been no cases confirmed in the DC area at this time. Healthy residents living in areas where cases are being confirmed should take everyday preventive actions (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>). There is no vaccine available for swine influenza.

If you are ill: Individuals who are sick with influenza-like illness (fever and one or two of the following: cough, sore throat, runny nose) are reminded to take standard measures to limit spread of disease such as frequent hand washing, covering their cough and avoiding going to work, school or other settings where they could infect others (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>). Individuals should consult with their primary medical provider if their symptoms are not being managed effectively with over-the-counter medications or if they have other medical conditions such as pregnancy or chronic illness. If you

become ill within seven (7) days of having traveled to Mexico, or locations in the United States and Canada where confirmed cases have occurred, you should take all of the above measures and consult with your primary care physician to determine if you need testing or treatment.

If you become ill at work: As is generally recommended, individuals who note the onset of influenza-like illness while at work should take measures to prevent the spread of disease such as leaving work in order to limit the potential exposure to others, cover their coughs and reinforce hand hygiene. If you have questions as to the nature of your symptoms please visit or call one of our Capitol Health Units for further assistance.

I have included links to the CDC with general precautions and advisories regarding the current swine influenza situation. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Summary of Swine Flu Investigation and Recommendations:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/investigation.htm>

General Information about Swine Flu:

http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/general_info.htm

World Health Organization Swine Flu Site:

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "B.P. Monahan MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brian P. Monahan, MD, FACP