



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
LANSING

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 15, 2012

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First Case of Influenza A (H3N2) Variant Detected in Michigan

LANSING – The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) announced today that the first case of variant H3N2 influenza infection in Michigan has been reported in a Washtenaw County child. State laboratory results indicate the child has tested positive for influenza A (H3N2) variant, or H3N2v. The child, who had recent exposure to swine at the Ingham County Fair, experienced mild illness and was not hospitalized. The state laboratory results will be sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for confirmatory testing. MDCH is working with local health departments to identify any other potential cases.

“While this strain of flu is new to Michigan, it’s important that people remember the common-sense, simple steps that can be taken to protect their health as we would with any flu season,” said Dr. Dean Sienko, Interim Chief Medical Executive of the MDCH. “Washing your hands, covering your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough, and staying home when you feel sick are some of the best ways to protect yourself and others from becoming ill.”

“This is not a food safety issue as influenza viruses are not transmitted by food. You cannot get influenza from eating pork or pork products,” said Dr. Nancy Frank, Assistant State Veterinarian, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).

Michigan joins the national investigation of recent H3N2v cases. On Aug. 10, the CDC announced 153 cases of H3N2v infection had been reported in the United States since July 12. Cases have been reported in Hawaii, Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois. Most cases have occurred in children, have been mild and not required treatment, and have resolved on their own. MDCH and MDARD recommend anyone experiencing flu symptoms who had recent exposure to swine visit their health care provider and tell them about this exposure.

Nationally, all identified H3N2v illnesses have been similar to that of seasonal influenza. Certain people are at greater risk of serious flu-related complications (including young children, elderly persons, pregnant women, and people with certain long-term medical conditions) which is true of both seasonal influenza and variant influenza infections.

Most human infections with H3N2v have occurred following direct contact with pigs. As a precaution, MDARD has been notifying swine exhibitors, fairs, and veterinarians of proper safety measures to prevent spreading illnesses.

"Throughout this fair season, MDARD has continued to stress the importance of implementing stringent bio-security practices to reduce exposure to animal diseases, especially those that might impact people," said Dr. Frank. "Swine owners, fairs showing livestock or exhibits featuring animals need to be diligent about their livestock and contact their veterinarian if animals become ill or exhibit signs of illness."

There are steps that can be taken to prevent the spread of influenza between people and pigs:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and running water before and after exposure to animals.
- Never eat, drink, or put things in your mouth while in animal areas, and don't take food or drink into animal areas.
- Children younger than 5, people 65 and older, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic medical conditions (such as, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, weakened immune systems, and neurological or neurodevelopmental conditions) are at high risk for serious complications if they get influenza. People with these risk factors should consider avoiding exposure to pigs and swine barns this summer, especially if sick pigs have been identified.
- If you have animals – including swine – watch them for signs of illness, and call a veterinarian if you suspect they might be sick.

For more information about the investigation and H3N2v, please visit the CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/influenza-variant-viruses-h3n2v.htm>.

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