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| [INSERT LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT LETTERHEAD] | Street Address, City, ST ZIP Code  Telephone  Email |

[INSERT DATE]

**Template Swine Influenza Health Alert Letter to Healthcare Providers Template**

Dear Healthcare Providers,

This is a “health alert” notice regarding a recent diagnosis of swine [VARIANT] influenza [TYPE & STRAIN] in a [PIG/PERSON] at the [INSERT FAIR NAME], which was held [INSERT DATES].

[INSERT LHD NAME] is working with the fair to notify those with the greatest risk for exposure, including swine exhibitors, their families, swine purchasers, and those attendees who have visited the swine barns.

Pigs may be infected with swine influenza viruses that are different from human flu viruses. Swine flu viruses spread among pigs and – while rare – they can spread from pigs to people too. Spread of swine flu viruses from a pig to a person is thought to happen in the same way that human flu viruses spread; mainly through droplets when infected pigs cough and sneeze. This has happened in different settings, especially at fairs where pigs from many farms come in close contact with each other and with people.

[INSERT LHD NAME] asks that the groups described above be mindful for symptoms of influenza for 10 days after their last exposure to pigs at the fair. Patients presenting with influenza-like illness (ILI) who have had recent contact with swine and/or attendance at the [INSERT FAIR NAME] should be tested for swine variant influenza at the state public health laboratory (additional information below). Similar to seasonal influenza illness in humans, swine influenza viruses can be treated using influenza antiviral drugs. These medications work better the sooner they are initiated.

Swine influenza in pigs is not a food safety concern. Therefore, you cannot get influenza by eating cooked pork or pork products.

Please contact [INSERT LHD NAME] if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[INSERT SIGNATURE, NAME & TITLE]

[INSERT LHD NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION]

**Important Information for Health Care Providers**:

* Human testing for swine variant influenza viruses can be performed at the MDHHS Bureau of Laboratories (BOL) free of charge. Preferred specimens include nasopharyngeal (NP) and/or oropharyngeal (OP) swabs.
* Testing at MDHHS BOL should not preclude influenza testing at a healthcare facility, but it is recommended that specimens be collected for both. In addition, it is recommended that healthcare facilities pursue PCR-based tests over rapid EIAs due to the low predictive value positive during times of low seasonal influenza activity.
* Influenza testing kits available to local public health can be used for specimen collection. Specimens tested at BOL should be shipped on ice packs and sent promptly.
* MDHHS epidemiology staff are available to answer any specimen collection or shipping inquiries.
* Please contact [INSERT LHD NAME] or MDHHS to report suspect cases and arrange testing.
  + MDHHS: (517) 335-8165
  + MDHHS after hours: (517) 335-9030