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Taney County Health Department



Public Health
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2009

PANDEMIC FLU ELEVATED TO LEVEL SIX BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

No Immediate Changes in Local Response Plans

On June 11, the World Health Organization (WHO) elevated the H1N1 (swine flu) to the highest level, declaring it a pandemic at Phase 6. The WHO made the decision based on the geographical spread of the H1N1 flu around the world and not the severity of illnesses. The WHO phases do NOT predict the severity of the virus. In other words, they have determined that the virus is present and spreading around the world, but they cannot predict how severe the virus will be in the fall. The important message that is conveyed by the WHO's action is to prepare your family, business, church and community to be in the best position to respond, if the virus would have a serious impact locally.

The Taney County Health Department and community response partners continue to monitor the movement of the H1N1 virus and track any changes that might occur in our community. Since April, there have been 50 confirmed cases in Missouri and no cases reported in Taney County. Robert Niezgoda, Taney County Health Department epidemiologist, said, "We are continuing to conduct surveillance information to identify the presence of any cases locally and monitor changes in the situation in Missouri, we are also focusing on how to prepare the community for any changes in the virus in the fall."

The public is reminded to use everyday common sense to protect your health and decrease the spread of the H1N1 virus as well as the seasonal flu viruses. Wash your hands often with warm water and soap; cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze; if you are sick or your child is sick stay home, recover and keep others well. Stay informed of the most current information by visiting our website at www.taneycohealth.org. If you would like information on how to prepare your family, church or business you may contact Jean Mueller or Robert Niezgoda at (417)334-4544.

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