

DATE: April, 30, 2009
TO: All State Employees
FROM: Cathy Hockert, *Cathlene Hockert*
Continuity of Government Planning Director
RE: H1N1 Novel Influenza Information memo #2

The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) raised the H1N1 novel influenza virus (reported as Swine Flu) Pandemic Alert Level to Phase 5. Officially, a Phase 5 declaration means that a novel virus has caused sustained community outbreaks in two or more countries within one WHO region.

We are NOT in a pandemic, but this change to a higher phase of alert is a signal to governments, the pharmaceutical industry and the business community that certain actions should now be undertaken with increased urgency, and at an accelerated pace.

We need to remain calm, yet continue to be vigilant and aggressive in our approach. We need to continue to encourage a culture of preparedness balanced with an understanding that events can and will unfold in an unpredictable manner and we must remain flexible.

Amidst this fluid situation, please remember that your state agency has been planning, preparing and exercising for a pandemic. Minnesota is better prepared for an influenza pandemic than at any time in history.

Minnesota Management and Budget is committed to communicating accurate and timely information to employees.

I have outlined suggested activities and considerations based on our current situation.

1. Employees should have in place individual and family readiness plans. Service Continuity is a responsibility of all of us. As public servants, we have a duty to be prepared at home so that we are prepared to come to work during an event that would threaten government service delivery or operations. This is even more critical as the event may be sustained over a period of time and may impact many people at the same time.

2. As a state agency, we will continue to have people to support, services to deliver. People will still have their disabilities or illnesses or support needs, even if they contract the flu. People will continue to request our services, and it's possible that we will have an increase in requests for certain services from our customers. Competent, trained, experienced staff such as you will be critical!

3. Because you are so critical to keep the State of Minnesota operating its priority services, there are policies in place to assist in assuring service continuation. This means, unless you are ill, employees will be expected to report to work as assigned. Managers will be expected to take the necessary steps to accomplish the agency's priority services.

4. Please see attached guidance document from the Minnesota Department of Health for more in-depth recommendations for work place and employee health and safety.

5. Now and especially in the future, there will be media attention and a lot of information surrounding the H1N1 novel influenza virus. **Some of this information may not be accurate.** We need to ensure employees are basing activities on accurate information. Please book mark this site: <https://www.bereadymn.com/> . This website has information for employees from a variety of credible sources. MMB will be updating this on a regular basis. There is an area on the site where employees can send an email to ask questions. These questions will be triaged by the State Agency Influenza Team and answers posted in the FAQ section.

We understand this situation may be worrisome and it is very fluid. In closing, I want to re-emphasize the high degree of preparation that the State has committed itself to over the last several years. While we are confident that the virility of the H1N1 Novel Influenza virus will be managed by the health care community, it is vital that we all continue to educate ourselves and continue to prepare as this world event unfolds.