

Panhandle Health District

8500 N. Atlas Road Hayden,

Idaho 83835

www.phd1.idaho.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Released by: Jim Fenton, Acting Director

Cynthia Taggart

Public Information Officer

(208) 415-5108

(208) 818-7288 (cell)

Probable H1N1 (Swine) Flu Case in

Kootenai County

The Idaho State Laboratory sent Idaho's first probable case of H1N1 (swine) flu to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Thursday for confirmation. The patient is a Kootenai County woman in her 60s who recently traveled to Texas.

The woman is recovering and did not require hospitalization.

"This is a strong reminder to everyone of the importance of practicing respiratory etiquette and good hygiene to protect themselves and others," said Lora Whalen, director of Family and Community Health for the Panhandle Health District (PHD). "Cover your cough and sneezes, throw used tissues in the trash, wash your hands well and often, stay home if you're ill and see your medical provider if your symptoms warrant.

"It's also important to maintain an appropriate distance between yourself and others who might be coughing or sneezing. These are all very common sense things that we can do to prevent the spread of flu".

PHD will operate an information hotline at 415-5199 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday to answer the public's questions on the H1N1 (swine) flu.

Panhandle Health District is working with health care providers, schools, governments and more in the region to monitor the situation.

About 7,000 doses of antiviral medication are heading to northern Idaho from the federal stockpile. The antivirals should arrive by next week. The medication is for people diagnosed with H1N1 flu and will be made available as a patient's doctor prescribes it.

PHD is asking the public to be aware of H1N1 flu symptoms: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. People with symptoms who have traveled recently or have been around anyone who has traveled recently to Mexico or the growing number of states with H1N1 flu cases are advised to see a healthcare professional.

The flu virus travels through the air and spreads quickly. People can spread the virus before they notice symptoms. To help prevent spread and infection, PHD reminds people to:

- Wash hands often and particularly after sneezing or coughing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze or cough into your sleeve.
- Stay home if you're sick to protect your co-workers and friends.
- Keep your distance from people who are sick.