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NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION NEWS RELEASE

The World Health Organization Raises the Pandemic Phase to Level 6

This means the H1N1 virus has spread globally, but remains to be a predominantly mild virus

Carson City –Although the World Health Organization (WHO) today declared the spread of H1N1 virus an international pandemic, the virus spread and severity in Nevada remains similar to that of seasonal flu and residents should take normal, reasonable precautions to prevent the spread of infection.

“The increase in the pandemic level does not mean we are experiencing a more severe virus or severe illness,” said Dr. Ihsan Azzam, State Epidemiologist. “The increase in the pandemic level means the H1N1 virus is more widespread globally, but remains mild in a majority of the cases. This is a time to prepare, not panic. We all need to have preventive measures in place.”

Prevention measures are key in decreasing your chances of becoming ill from regular flu and the H1N1 virus.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- When you cough or sneeze, try to do so in your sleeve. Otherwise, please use a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash. Then, wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- **Do not go to work or school if you are sick.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- If you don't have one yet, consider developing a family emergency plan as a precaution.

The symptoms of the 2009 H1N1 flu virus (swine flu) in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. As with seasonal

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flu, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths may occur, primarily in people who have a compromised immune system. Like seasonal flu, the 2009 H1N1 flu virus may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

Active surveillance continues to be done for both seasonal influenza and the H1N1 virus.

Weekly updates are provided every Friday on the Health Division's website:

<http://health.nv.gov/FluSurveillanceReports.htm>

For more information, please access the Health Division's website: <http://health.nv.gov> or go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website: www.cdc.gov

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