



## *County of Columbia - Emergency Medical Services*

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### **ADVISORY UPDATE H1N1 Influenza A (Swine Flu)**

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Columbia County has confirmed its first case of H1N1 Influenza (previously "Swine Flu"). Additional cases are being investigated as well.

As a reminder, responders are encouraged to follow the guidelines below to limit exposure:

- Initial interrogation of the patient from at least 2 meters (6.5 feet) away to determine if personal protective equipment precautions are necessary.
- Recommended PPE for taking care of ill/potentially infected patients includes: disposable gowns, gloves, goggles/face shields and N95 or better respirators. PPE should be donned and doffed according to published guidelines to prevent cross contamination, including eye and gown protection when splash or airborne contamination is possible.
- Placing a mask on all patients with suspected symptoms, using filtered oxygen masks when available, or non-rebreather masks when oxygen is required. Droplet producing procedures should be avoided whenever possible including nebulizers, bag-valve-mask, suctioning or intubation. If bag-valve-masks are needed, use those with HEPA filters whenever possible.
- Alert receiving hospital personnel of the possibility of an infectious patient as soon as possible and hold suspected infectious patients in the ambulance until their destination in the hospital is known, rather than immediately moving them into the emergency room.
- Perform a thorough cleaning of the stretcher and all equipment that has come in contact with or been within 2 meters (6.5 feet) with an approved disinfectant, upon completion of the call.

It's uncertain at this time how severe this H1N1 outbreak will be in terms of how many people infected have severe complications or death related to H1N1 infection. While nationwide influenza-like-illness surveillance is trending downward, localized outbreaks are ongoing and it's likely that such outbreaks will continue over the summer. It's uncertain how the H1N1 virus will affect the upcoming 2009-2010 influenza season.

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