



Company \_\_\_\_\_ Job Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Weekly Tool Box Talk: **Maine H1N1 Influenza (“Swine Flu”) Update**

### **Why is this new H1N1 virus sometimes called “swine flu”?**

This virus was originally referred to as “swine flu” because laboratory testing showed that many of the genes in this new virus were very similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America. But further study has shown that this new virus is very different from what normally circulates in North American pigs. It has two genes from flu viruses that normally circulate in pigs in Europe and Asia and avian genes and human genes. Scientists call this a “quadruple reassortant” virus.

### **What are the signs and symptoms of this virus in people?**

The symptoms of this new H1N1 flu virus in people are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Also, like seasonal flu, severe illnesses and death has occurred as a result of illness associated with this virus.

### **Case finding:**

There are 1 confirmed and 6 probable cases in Maine: two adults in Kennebec County, three adults and one youth in York County, and one youth in Penobscot County. All are recovering. Cases continue to be investigated by Maine CDC infectious disease epidemiologists.

### **Key messages:**

H1N1 is here in Maine. We all need to stay informed, be prepared, and most importantly practice proper respiratory hygiene, including the following steps:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

Those wanting general information about H1N1 may call the CDC toll-free information line at (888) 257-0990. The line will be open until on weekdays from 9am to 5pm.

Safety Recommendations: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Specific Topics: \_\_\_\_\_

M.S.D.S. Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Attended By: \_\_\_\_\_

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