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For immediate release by:
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H1N1 (Swine) Influenza Virus Cases Confirmed in Middlesex County
May 28, 2009

Middlesex County Public Health Department (MCPHD) has been informed by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services of two confirmed cases of H1N1 (swine influenza) virus within Middlesex County. These confirmed cases, one from Highland Park and one from Edison, are from an influenza cluster in students from a private parochial school in Piscataway. A cluster is defined as 2 or more individuals with symptom onset within 7 days of each other who have common exposure, i.e. school. The private school has been closed since Friday, May 22nd and will remain closed until Monday, June 1st. David A. Papi, Director-Health Officer of MCPHD stated, "We have been working closely with the school, local physicians, parents, and all local health departments in the County, particularly Piscataway and Edison health departments."

Director-Health Officer Papi states, "We will continue to provide residents with information about this situation and advise them of any steps necessary to protect their health. What is important for parents and residents to do now is:

- Know the symptoms of flu
- Report illness to your school nurse
- Call your doctor if you have symptoms of the flu
- Practice respiratory hygiene practices"

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to seasonal flu and include fever, lack of appetite, muscle aches, chills, coughing and fatigue. Some people have also reported having a sore throat, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Director Papi stated, "Our department continues surveillance of influenza activity in an effort to identify cases of H1N1 flu in the community." At this time residents are being encouraged to follow recommended respiratory hygiene practices

Respiratory hygiene practices include:

- Covering coughs and sneezes with tissues and disposing of tissues properly, or by coughing and sneezing into your upper sleeve.
- Washing your hands with soap and water often.
- Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Staying home if you are sick.
- Contacting your doctor if you have symptoms of the flu.

Other healthy habits residents can do to help prevent getting the flu include: eating a well balanced diet, drinking plenty of water and getting rest.

The Public Health Department's Division of Epidemiology and Public Health Preparedness, and the Nursing Division are continuing to work with county hospitals, healthcare providers, local and state health departments, schools, childcare centers and other departments and agencies to ensure quick identification of influenza cases in Middlesex County.

Director Papi recommends that schools and childcare settings increase education on respiratory hygiene and monitor attendees for acute febrile respiratory illness. School or childcare participants with acute febrile respiratory illness should be sent home according to facilities-established procedures with instructions to stay at home until 24-48 hours after their symptoms resolve, or for 7 days if they are diagnosed with influenza.

H1N1 flu (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by a type A influenza virus that regularly causes outbreaks of influenza among pigs. Swine flu viruses do not normally infect humans; however, human infections with swine flu do occur. You cannot get swine flu from eating properly handled and properly cooked pork or pork products.

Information can be obtained by visiting the Middlesex County Public Health Department web site at <http://co.middlesex.nj.us/publichealth/>. The site contains facts sheets, phone numbers, websites, guidance documents, links to podcasts, mental health services, and resources for schools.

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