



**DAN ONORATO**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

# COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 27, 2009

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## **Onorato Says County Health Department Is Coordinating Efforts to Protect Residents from Swine Flu**

**PITTSBURGH** — Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato today said the County Health Department is coordinating local public health surveillance and intervention efforts to protect residents from a nationwide outbreak of swine flu. The illness has affected dozens of people in five states, including New York and Ohio. No deaths have been reported.

“We are fortunate to have among the best health department, medical centers and research institutions in the country right here in Allegheny County,” said Onorato. “Our public health professionals are monitoring the swine flu situation and are coordinating with federal and state agencies. If any cases appear in our region, we will be prepared to address the situation quickly and effectively.”

No cases have been reported in Allegheny County or Pennsylvania at the present time.

“For the moment, we’re in a wait and see mode in terms of swine flu incidence here in Allegheny County,” said Health Department Director, Dr. Bruce W. Dixon. “We’re honing our surveillance efforts and boosting our intervention capabilities to meet this potential challenge.”

Interfacing with federal and state health agencies, the Health Department has developed a local plan that includes a swine flu surveillance system, laboratory support, health provider and public health education, as well as the availability of antiviral prescription drugs to combat any confirmed future swine flu cases.

“While seasonal influenza and swine flu are serious illnesses, sniffles, coughs and colds are due to many different viruses that do not indicate influenza,” said Dr. Dixon. “Persons who have

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symptoms like fevers, headaches, muscle aches and significant coughs should contact their physician by phone first before being seen; especially if they have traveled to Mexico or had contact with someone who did.”

In the meantime, basic public health hygiene practices can greatly decrease any risks associated with the current outbreak. These include:

- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Trying to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Seeing your doctor first, if you get sick. Don't go to an emergency room or hospital and wait. After treatment, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

For more information about the County's swine flu control efforts, visit the Health Department at [www.achd.net](http://www.achd.net).

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