



## CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Health Department activates Emergency Preparedness Plan – on High Alert for Swine Flu**

Mayville, NY - Chautauqua County Health Department Public Health Director Christine Schuyler has activated the County's emergency preparedness plan and put the county on high alert to quickly identify and respond to any suspect cases of swine flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has declared a public health emergency which enables state and localities to receive quicker access to vital resources and other necessary assistance.

Swine flu is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses that causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. According to the CDC, Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but in the past, this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people.

"Chautauqua County has been preparing for an event such as this for years," said Public Health Director Schuyler. "Our team of public health and emergency preparedness staff has the knowledge and resources to address swine flu. We are implementing comprehensive plans that have been developed and practiced for many years. We are in continuous, ongoing communication with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), county hospitals and other health care providers as well as schools." added Schuyler.

The symptoms of 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. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Infected people may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 7 days after becoming sick.

The Health Department reminds county residents to take the same precautions to prevent illness that you would take with seasonal flu, such as staying home when you are ill. At this time, parents do not need to keep otherwise healthy children home from school. Seasonal flu, which has symptoms similar to swine flu, is still active in New York State. Precautionary measures for both seasonal flu and swine flu include:

- Washing your hands often with soap and warm water. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective.
- Avoiding people who are ill.
- Staying home from work or school if you are sick.
- Using tissue when you cough, sneeze or spit, and dispose of the tissue in a covered trash bin.
- Keeping hands away from your face. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cleaning shared space more often such as phone receivers, keyboards, steering wheels and office equipment.
- Refraining from sharing personal items such as forks, spoons, toothbrushes and towels.

The NYSDOH has activated a 24 hour toll-free hotline that county residents can use to get answers to questions regarding swine flu. The hotline is 1-800-808-1987. The public can obtain more information about swine flu and precautionary measures at NYSDOH's web site at [www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov) or at the CDC's web site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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