

As the number of confirmed swine flu cases in the United States grows, we want to remind health centers that now is a time for preparedness. Here are a few suggestions in response to this public health situation:

- Be sure that your health center is monitoring the health alert network (HAN) communiqués from your state or local health department
- Contact your local health department to confirm testing protocol and reporting procedures. If you are having any problems working with your local health department to get information or resources, notify your Primary Care Association
- Provide all clinicians in your health center with CDC guidance on case definitions, infection control practices in the healthcare setting, and antiviral recommendations. These documents are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/guidance/>
- Remind all staff to maintain good infection control practices, including washing their hands frequently, covering their cough, and staying home when they are feeling ill. Here is a link for Cover your Cough posters in many languages: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/covercough.htm>
- Consider mask use for symptomatic patients and front line staff, especially if you have confirmed or suspected cases in your community. Here is a link for signage and personal protective equipment information: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/resphygiene.htm>
- Have information about swine flu available for your patients. Here is a link for patient education materials in English: [http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu\\_you.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you.htm) and in Spanish: [http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/espanol/influenza\\_porcina\\_usted.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/espanol/influenza_porcina_usted.htm)
- Work with your Primary Care Association to stay informed about state specific recommendations and response to this situation
- Recognize that you may get calls from your local media, especially if there is an outbreak in your area. Review your communications plan and contact the Public Information Officer at your local health department and your PCA to ensure that the messages going out to the public in your area are consistent.
- Contact the CDC if you have a question about screening, testing, or treatment that hasn't been answered at your local or state level. You can send an email to [coca@cdc.gov](mailto:coca@cdc.gov).

For the more information, regularly monitor the following websites and sign up for email updates:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in English <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/> and in Spanish <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/espanol/>
- Department of Health and Human Services <http://www.hhs.gov/>
- State Health Department Pan Flu Plans: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/stateplans.html>

NACHC is working closely with our partners on the federal and state levels to monitor this evolving situation. Again, we don't know if the swine flu threat will worsen, but your vigilance protects the health of our staff, patients, and community.

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