

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** State Executives  
AHCA/NCAL Leadership and Members

**FROM:** Janice Zalen, Sr. Director of Special Programs

**SUBJECT:** **Novel H1N1 Influenza Update No. 21**

**DATE:** August 11, 2009

### New CDC Recommendations and Guidance

On August 5, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revised its recommendation for the amount of time people with influenza-like illness should stay home and away from other people to prevent spreading the flu, but the revised recommendation does **not** apply to healthcare settings. The recommendation for healthcare settings has not changed and remains at staying home for 7 days after symptoms began or until all symptoms are gone, whichever is longer.

For others, CDC now recommends that those with influenza-like illness stay home until at least 24 hours after the fever is gone, without using fever-reducing medicines like acetaminophen or ibuprofen. A fever is defined as having a temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater. During this past spring, most people infected with H1N1 influenza had fevers for 2-4 days. The guidance applies to all people who have the flu or flu-like illness, even if they are taking antiviral drugs. The complete recommendations may be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance//exclusion.htm>.

As was widely reported in the news, , CDC released new school guidance on August 7 that provides a set of strategies that schools can use to stay open while protecting students and staff. This guidance is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/schoolguidance.htm>.

Noting that influenza is always a serious contagious disease, CDC recommends that individuals protect themselves by: 1) taking time to get vaccinated; 2) taking everyday preventive actions, e.g., washing hands often;

and 3) taking flu antiviral drugs if recommended by the doctor. For more information and a downloadable brochure, please go to the CDC web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm>.

#### N 95 Respirators and Upcoming IOM Workshop

As reported previously (see H1N1 Update No. 20 at [http://www.ahcancal.org/facility\\_operations/clinical\\_practice/Pages/SwineFluUpdate20.aspx](http://www.ahcancal.org/facility_operations/clinical_practice/Pages/SwineFluUpdate20.aspx)), the Institute of Medicine (IOM) will conduct a study and develop recommendations on personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers to protect against the novel H1N1 influenza virus. Issues to be addressed include: the potential for exposure to the H1N1 virus among healthcare workers, which groups of workers are at risk, which patient care activities pose a risk of exposure and what degree of risk, and what is known and what is unknown about transmissibility, severity and virulence of the current virus and how transmissibility might change. One component of the study will be a public workshop that will be held August 12 and 13, which can be accessed by webcast. The workshop will bring together experts to: examine the emerging science and clinical experience base associated with H1N1; discuss criteria used to delineate infection control guidelines; discuss criteria used to assess risk to the healthcare workforce; examine what's known about the effectiveness of medical masks, respirators, gowns, gloves, and eye protection in preventing H1N1 and seasonal influenza transmission. For details on the webcast access to this workshop, go to <http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3740/71769/71867.aspx>.

#### AHCA Webinar on Disaster Planning

The fourth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, along with the impending threat of H1N1, provides strong motivation to review lessons learned and to update disaster plans to ensure that long term care facilities are prepared for a disaster of any kind. "Watered Down Truth" author Robert Abrams and defense attorney Jim Cobb will present on the murder indictments of nursing home owners in St. Bernard Parish and will weave legal strategy, transcripts, media coverage and the evidence that ultimately acquitted the defendants. Joe Donchess, Executive Director of the Louisiana Health Care Association, will describe implementation of lessons learned from Katrina. Jocelyn Montgomery, Director of Clinical Affairs, California Association of Health Facilities, will provide realistic, all-hazards solutions for preparing for disasters, including an H1N1 pandemic. Janice Zalen will provide the latest news on the novel H1N1 Influenza A pandemic.

