

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Executives
AHCA/NCAL Leadership and Members

FROM: Janice Zalen, Sr. Director of Special Programs

SUBJECT: **H1N1 Influenza Update No. 15**

DATE: June 11, 2009

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports 13,217 cases of confirmed and probable novel H1N1 influenza cases, over 1,000 hospitalizations and 27 deaths in the U.S.

Today, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic, i.e., moved from Phase 5 to Phase 6 on the pandemic alert scale. It is important to understand that the shift from Phase 5 to Phase 6 means that the pandemic is spreading wider geographically, not that it is more severe. WHO reported 28,774 cases of H1N1 influenza in 74 countries, including 144 deaths.

The raise to Phase 6, which is the highest level on the pandemic alert scale, does not change activity in the U.S. because we have already acknowledged that we are in a pandemic and activated our pandemic preparedness plans. It impacts other countries in that they would need to activate their pandemic preparedness plans, if they have not already done so.

The Southern hemisphere is in the very beginning of its influenza season and is being watched closely for insight as to what will come during our influenza season in the fall. So far, Australia has seen its largest number of influenza cases in May (833 cases) since national reporting of the disease began in 2001. The peak months for seasonal influenza in the Southern hemisphere are July and August.

According to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, “We acted aggressively to stay ahead of the virus as it spread across the country. Now our challenge is to prepare for a possible return in the fall.”