



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

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Governor Rell Directs Antiviral Drugs Distributed to State Hospitals as Swine Flu Precaution

Governor M. Jodi Rell today announced that she has directed the state Department of Public Health to distribute nearly 10,000 treatment courses of antiviral medication to the state's acute care hospitals, a precautionary move against the spread of swine flu.

There are no confirmed cases of swine flu in the state, but samples from two probable cases have been sent to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for testing. Several other cases are undergoing preliminary testing at the state DPH laboratory.

"While there is no vaccine against swine flu, these medications can reduce the severity and duration of various strains of influenza, including swine flu," Governor Rell said. "The drugs interfere with the ability of the virus to make copies of itself, which in turn helps the body fight the infection. The sooner anyone who gets sick starts taking the antiviral medication the sooner they will start to feel better, so it makes sense to get the medicine out to the hospitals now.

"The good news is that Connecticut is prepared to deal with this problem," the Governor said. "As far back as December 2005 I ordered state officials to begin updating and improving our statewide response plan for dealing with pandemic influenza. Since then we have improved our monitoring systems, our communication networks and our medical responses. That preparation is paying off now."

Each Connecticut hospital will receive as many treatment courses as it has licensed beds. Each treatment course is a 10-day supply of either oseltamivir (Tamiflu) or zanamivir (Relenza).

In all, 9,152 treatment courses will be distributed from the state's current stockpile of about 11,000 treatment courses. Governor Rell has formally requested delivery of one-quarter of the state's allocation of antiviral medication from the Strategic

National Stockpile, an additional 134,000 treatment courses. That supply is expected to arrive from the CDC in the next three to five days.