



# News

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **H1N1 Update: New Probable Novel H1N1 Case**

*School Closure Guidance Revised*

**Hartford** – The Department of Public Health (DPH) has identified a new probable case of novel H1N1 flu (swine flu). The specimen received indicates that the person has non-subtypeable Influenza A, which means that the virus is not regular seasonal influenza. The specimen is being forwarded to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to determine if the virus is novel H1N1 flu.

The new probable case involves a resident of Stamford. This case brings the total number of probable or confirmed cases of novel H1N1 flu in Connecticut to seventeen (four confirmed cases and 13 probable. DPH is no longer considering inconclusive test results as probable). Among the 17 confirmed and probable cases, 11 are female, 6 are male. The average age is 17 years. Illness onset dates range from 4/22/09 - 5/2/09. Cases were reported from the following counties: Fairfield (11); Hartford (4), Middlesex (1), and New London (1). All cases are recovering and did not require hospitalization.

Earlier today, the Department of Public Health held a conference call with school superintendants to discuss its revised recommendations regarding school closures and dismissal due to novel H1N1 flu (swine flu) that reflect new guidance provided by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) earlier this week.

New information on disease severity promoted health experts to revise the school closure guidance that was initially published. The majority of U.S. cases have been less severe than initially reported from Mexico with fewer hospitalizations and death. Further, the spread of the novel H1N1 flu virus throughout the world demonstrates that the virus is now traveling through community transmission, suggesting that the closure of schools should no longer be based on the identification of a confirmed or probable case of novel H1N1 flu at a particular school.

Health officials now recommend the primary means to reduce the spread of influenza in schools focus on early identification of ill students and staff, staying home when ill, and

good cough and hand hygiene etiquette. Decisions about school closure should be at the discretion of local authorities based on local considerations, including public concern and the impact of school absenteeism and staffing shortages.

The DPH continues to ask residents to take precautions to prevent getting the flu or spreading it by staying home from work or school if they are sick, washing their hands frequently, and coughing or sneezing into their sleeve or a tissue.

*The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph) or call (860) 509-7270.*

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