



Board of Chosen Freeholders
SALEM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
98 Market Street
Salem, New Jersey 08079-1995

856-935-7510 x 8302
856-358-3857
FAX 856-935-8483

October 23, 2009

Superintendent,

The media has been releasing a lot of information about the number of “confirmed” cases in our communities. Many people have been focusing on the number of cases as a reading of the current situation. The Salem County Health Department is encouraging school officials to refrain from focusing on this information. As a public health entity, we are required to follow the CDC’s recommendations of influenza classification. The following definitions are the CDC’s regulations of influenza testing and classification.

Confirmed Influenza A Case: This individual would have received a rapid diagnostic test (RDT) at their doctor’s office that confirmed it was Influenza-A. There would be no further testing, so there is no further confirmation of that case. Although H1N1 does fall under Influenza-A, this test is not advanced enough to completely determine if it is H1N1.

Confirmed Pandemic H1N1 Case: This individual would have received a RDT to determine they have influenza A. This specimen would then be sent to a state certified testing facility. It would undergo further testing to determine if it is Pandemic H1N1, rather than a seasonal strain of Influenza-A. If the results indicate Pandemic H1N1, it is then a confirmed case.

At this time, the CDC and the state health department are only accepting case confirmations from FDA approved testing sites. These sites are only accepting specimens from hospital intensive care units. Therefore, the individuals who have been told they are a confirmed case do not meet the criteria set forth by the CDC. It is understandable that parents want definite responses when it comes to their children and doctors want to calm their fears by giving them an answer. At the same time, the announcement of cases in school districts creates panic and unrest in the community.

For all of these reasons, we are strongly discouraging school officials from making proclamations of confirmed H1N1 cases. Rather, communities should be aware that there is increased influenza activity in the schools and they should watch for influenza like symptoms in their homes. Please stress that the treatment for any flu is the same. We hope that this clears up any confusion and will prevent any panic in our communities. We have enclosed a document that can be sent home to parents, put on your websites, etc.

Thank you for working with us to keep our communities safe!

Sincerely,

Herb Roeschke, Public Health Coordinator