



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 06-12-09

CONTACT: Leslie Kinnee

989-831-3669, kinnee@mmdhd.org

Mid-Michigan District Health Department

615 N. State St., Stanton, MI 48888-9702, www.mmdhd.org

H1N1 pandemic threat level rises

ITHACA/STANTON/ST. JOHNS~ The World Health Organization (WHO) raised the pandemic alert level from phase five to phase six yesterday, indicating a global pandemic outbreak. Raising the alert to level six means that H1N1 Influenza has reached widespread human infection. The WHO pandemic phase designation is based on geographic spread of the influenza virus, not on the severity of the illness.

“Although H1N1 continues to spread to other countries, the disease isn’t any worse than seasonal influenza,” said Kimberly Singh, Health Officer for Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD). “The WHO declaration will not change our current response to H1N1, but we will continue to prepare for what may happen in the fall with H1N1 when the traditional flu season starts,” she continued. “The designation from level five to level six is important because it sends the strong message that the virus is here to stay and it’s imperative that we continue our aggressive efforts to prepare and respond.”

The designation from level 5 to level 6 is important because it sends the strong message that the virus is here to stay and it’s imperative that we continue our aggressive efforts to prepare and respond.

MMDHD is advising residents to continue taking the following precautions:

- Wash hands often with soap or water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Use alcohol-based hand cleaners when soap and water is not available.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoid touching surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus.
- Stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious foods.
- If sick, stay home from work or daycare and limit contact with others at least two days after symptoms disappear.

In addition to taking the above precautions, Dr. Robert Graham, Medical Director for MMDHD, is advising those at-risk for influenza complications (people over the age of 65 and under five years-of-age and those with chronic medical conditions) who develop influenza symptoms to contact their physician right away.

For more information on the H1N1 pandemic influenza, please visit www.mmdhd.org.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

###