

## Swine Flu Issue Talking Points

### **H1N1 (Swine) Flu effects everyone, the younger and the older populations alike.**

- Younger Population: H1N1 creates complications.
- Elderly Population: Seasonal influenza **and** H1N1 creates complications
- Both forms of influenza are dangerous for long-term care residents.

### **Long-term care facilities should ensure that they:**

- Put all residents and employees on tamaflu
- Isolate the resident or cohort him or her when contaminated

### **In a general infection the means to control the situation is an important skill.**

#### **Methods of control include:**

- Use **rapid** influenza testing to catch the outbreak before it begins;
- Be sure that the employees are well educated on symptoms, vaccination options, control methods and testing;
- Antiviral chemoprophylaxis is important to give to residents and employees alike when an outbreak occurs considering the situation;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick by keeping distance, isolating the infected person to avoid spreading influenza
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them. Influenza is spread person-to-person through the coughing or sneezing of infected people.

### **Facility Protocols**

- The safety and well being of our residents, staff, visitors and our community is our primary concern.
- We are working closely with the epidemiologist and other staff at the Department of Health.
- Our facility has an established, formal system for monitoring public health advisories and has been receiving regular updates from the Florida Health Care Association, including notices from the Florida Department of Health and other entities.
- We established a comprehensive response and are conducting refresher education for all levels of staff, including working with an outside consulting firm for additional support.

- While we cannot give specific health-related information about the individual[s] due to privacy laws (HIPPA), we can tell you that we are taking every precaution to avoid the spread of the infection.
- Viruses and infections are extremely unpredictable and variable in the elderly, so we will continue working closely with the health department to ensure the safety and well being of everyone.

**Possible Q/A from Media:**

**How are you/have you been able to monitor/diagnose?**

- We have a protocol for monitoring both staff and residents for flu symptoms and distinguishing between normal seasonal flu and swine flu
- Consider sharing this protocol, if asked

**Do you have any additional confirmed cases?**

- The facility has a system in place for diagnosing staff or residents with symptoms of swine flu.
- If needed to give specifics here: on [date] [local health department] began testing [residents/staff] to determine if we had a confirmed case of Swine Flu

**How are you alerting family members/others?**

- The facility has a communications plan for residents, family members and staff, which includes providing them with information quickly and clearly, including updates from the [local health department], as well as what precautions we are taking to avoid the spread of infection.

*\* FHCA recommends having your legal counsel review these talking points prior to media interviews.*

For more information refer to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.fhca.org/news/swineflu.php) or FHCA's swine flu resources page at <http://www.fhca.org/news/swineflu.php>.