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Swine flu shots studied for fall

Schoolchildren may be first vaccinated

The News-Press staff and wire

WASHINGTON - Schoolchildren may be first in line for government-provided swine flu vaccinations starting in October - and get them on site at schools.

The White House said the president and his Cabinet are urging states to determine how they'll tackle the looming threat of the virus' resurgence.

"We may end up averting a crisis. That's our hope," said President Barack Obama, who took time from the G8 summit in Italy to telephone another summit back home - the 500 state and local health officials meeting to prepare for swine flu's fall threat.

No final decision has been made on whether to vaccinate Americans, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius stressed. That depends on studies with experimental batches set to start in August.

First in line probably will be schoolchildren, young adults with risky conditions such as asthma, pregnant women and health workers, she said. Swine flu seems more dangerous to those groups.

Judith Hartner, director of the Lee County Health Department, said Thursday her staff has confirmed 38 cases of swine flu in Lee County.

"Most have been children and young adults," she said.

Six students at Spring Creek Elementary in Bonita Springs had confirmed cases of swine flu, Hartner said, but children attending schools in other parts of Lee County also were affected. Spring Creek school was shut down for three days in early May as health officials attempted to thwart the spread of swine flu.
