

April 30, 2009

Contacts:

Joe Donzelli, Lee County Schools, (239) 461-8420

Sharon Warnecke, Lee County Schools, (239) 337-8244/ (239) 410-6212

Jennifer James-Mesloh, Lee County Health Department, (239) 461-6120/ (850) 519-5728

*** * * * Media Briefing at 2:00pm * * * ***
Lee County Public Education Center
2855 Colonial Blvd, Ft. Myers

Lee County Health Department & Lee County Public School Officials
Suspect Case of Swine Influenza (Swine Flu)

Fort Myers—The Lee County Health Department (LCHD) is investigating a suspect case of swine influenza (swine flu) in a school-age child. This is the first suspect case being investigated in Lee County, Florida.

“In an attempt to prevent the spread of swine flu, we are monitoring and working with the Lee County School District, families and close contacts of the student” LCHD Director Judith A. Hartner, M.D., MPH, M.P.A. said.

While this case has not yet been confirmed, the LCHD and district officials have determined that schools should remain open and operate under normal school hours, including before and after school programs. Precautionary steps being taken the student’s school, which include:

- Special areas have been designated for children who are symptomatic
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting measures where appropriate
- Increased awareness and observation by staff to identify symptomatic students

“The health of students and staff is our primary concern and therefore we are taking appropriate precautionary measures under the direction of health department officials,” said Dr. James Browder, Superintendent of Schools.

School district and LCHD are monitoring the situation very closely and will take additional steps if it becomes necessary. Lee County parents have been informed of the situation and provided with information on what they should do if they think or their child may have been exposed to swine flu.

As with other infectious illnesses, one of the most important preventive practices is careful and frequent hand-washing. Cleaning your hands often, using soap and water to remove potentially infectious materials from your skin and help prevent disease transmission. Also, remember when coughing use either a tissue or cough into your sleeve but never your hands.

-more-

The swine flu outbreak is ongoing and additional cases are expected. If you would like more information concerning swine flu and affected areas you can go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu> or you may contact the state information line at 1-800-342-3557.

-###-