

# AT YOUR SERVICE

NEWS FROM VAN BUREN/CASS DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Volume 14, Issue 2

August 2012

## Novel Flu Associated with Swine Exposure

A new variant of influenza A (H3N2v) has occurred in 3 states: Indiana, Ohio and Hawaii. This virus was first detected in humans in July 2011. Most of the cases are thought to have been infected as a result of close contact with swine prior to onset of the flu symptoms. Since July 12, 2012, all 16 cases identified report contact with swine.

## Interim Recommendations for Health Care Providers

- Clinicians who suspect influenza in persons with recent exposure to swine should obtain a nasopharyngeal swab or aspirate from the patient, place the swab or aspirate in viral transport medium. Contact the MDCH, Division of Communicable Disease at 517-335-8165.
- Reverse-transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing for influenza should be considered for patients with influenza-like illness prior to the start of the traditional influenza season in October.
- RT-PCR testing for influenza should be considered throughout the year for patients with influenza-like illness reporting recent swine exposure and for those who can be epidemiologically linked to confirmed cases of variant influenza.
- Commercially available rapid influenza diagnostic tests (RIDTs) may not detect H3N2v virus in respiratory specimens. Therefore, a negative rapid influenza diagnostic test result does not exclude infection with H3N2v or any influenza virus. In addition, a positive test result for influenza A cannot confirm H3N2v virus infection because these tests can not distinguish between influenza A virus subtypes (they do not differentiate between human influenza A viruses and H3N2v virus). Therefore, respiratory specimens

should be collected and sent for RT-PCR testing at a state public health laboratory.

- Clinicians should consider antiviral treatment with oral oseltamivir or inhaled zanamivir in patients with suspected or confirmed H3N2v virus infection. Antiviral treatment is most effective when started as soon as possible after influenza illness onset.

## Interim Recommendations for the Public

- Persons who are at high risk for influenza complications (e.g., underlying chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or neurological conditions, or who are pregnant or younger than 5 years, older than 65 years of age or have weakened immune systems) should consider avoiding exposure to pigs and swine barns this summer, especially if ill pigs have been identified.
- Persons engaging in activities that may involve swine contact, such as attending agricultural events or exhibiting swine, should wash their hands frequently with soap and running water before and after exposure to animals; avoid eating or drinking in animal areas; and avoid close contact with animals that look or act ill.
- Patients who experience influenza-like symptoms following direct or close contact with pigs and who seek medical care should inform their health care provider about the exposure.
- Patients with influenza-like illness who are at high risk for influenza complications (e.g., underlying chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or neurological conditions, or who are pregnant or younger than 5 years, older than 65 years of age or have weakened immune systems) should see their health care provider promptly to determine if treatment with antiviral medications is warranted.
- Influenza viruses have not been shown to be transmissible to people through eating properly handled and prepared

pork or other products derived from pigs.

For more information about the proper handling and preparation of pork, visit the USDA website fact sheet "Fresh Pork from Farm to Table."

## How to Reach Us:

### Van Buren County main office

Hartford: Phone: (269) 621-3143  
Fax: (269) 621-2725

Address: 57418 CR 681  
Hartford MI 49057

### Cass County main office

Cassopolis: Phone: (269) 445-5280  
Fax: (269) 445-5278

Address: 201 M-62 North  
Cassopolis MI 49031

### Medical Director:

Rick Johansen, MD MPH  
(269) 621-3143 ext 318  
drj74747@yahoo.com

### Health Officer:

Jeffery L Elliott, BBA  
(269) 621-3143, ext 337  
jeffe@vbcassdhd.org

### Public Health Nursing:

Suzanne Bailey, RN BSN  
(269) 621-3143, ext 319  
sueb@vbcassdhd.org

### Family Planning:

Mona Hale, MSN APRN BC  
(269) 621-3143, ext 330  
mhale@vbcassdhd.org

### Substance Abuse:

Nikki VanSandt, MA LPC  
CAADC NCC CCS  
(269) 621-3143, ext 306  
nikkiv@vbcassdhd.org

### Environmental Health:

Mike Laufer, RS  
(269) 621-3143 ext 312  
mlaufer@vbcassdhd.org

### Bioterrorism Coordination:

Jennifer Zordan, BS  
(269) 621-3143 ext 382  
jzordan@vbcassdhd.org