



This is an official **DHEC Health Update**

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Guidance for Healthcare Workers with Flu-Like Illness

This DHEC Health Update supersedes previous guidance (dated 13 May 09) in the Health Update document, "Interim recommendations for infection control for care of patients with confirmed, probable or suspect novel H1N1 influenza" (available at: www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/han/docs/DHU-flu-4.pdf), only as it pertains to the management of ill healthcare personnel.

Unless noted in this document, the additional interim infection control guidelines present in the above-referenced document continues to be official DHEC guidance/recommendations.

Monitoring the Health Status of Healthcare Workers

Healthcare facilities should continue to use plans developed for continuity of operations during an influenza pandemic, which should include monitoring the health status of their staff. Additional information to assist facilities in developing/refining their facility-specific plans can be found at the following links:

- General information for hospitals/clinics/physician practices: www.flu.gov/professional/hospital/index.html
- Hospital Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist: www.flu.gov/professional/hospital/hospitalchecklist.pdf

Healthcare workers should report symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, rhinorrhea, myalgias, or headache) early to avoid exposing others. If symptoms develop while at work, healthcare workers should put on a mask, reassign patient care responsibilities, and contact a supervisor immediately.

Exclusion of Healthcare Workers with Flu-Like Illness

Current CDC recommendations state that healthcare workers should be excluded from work for 7 days from symptom onset or until the resolution of symptoms, whichever is longer. DHEC supports the guidance provided from the CDC.

However, healthcare institutions must consider the total best interest of their patients. When healthcare institutions are experiencing high absenteeism of key personnel, this best interest might be served if certain healthcare workers are allowed to return sooner.

Under no circumstances should healthcare workers return sooner than 24 hours after resolution of fever without the use of anti-pyretics and preferably after all symptoms have resolved. If workers return before 7 days, DHEC recommends having the worker wear a surgical mask and take other actions to minimize potential transmission to patients—which would include avoiding highest risk patients such as bone marrow recipients.

The decision to shorten healthcare workers' exclusion period is that of the healthcare institution, which must take into account the total best interest of their patients.

Sources for additional information

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, H1N1 Flu Clinical and Public Health Guidance: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/

DHEC Contact Information for Reportable Diseases and Reporting Requirements

Reporting of outbreaks/clusters of cases of influenza (both seasonal and novel H1N1), aggregate positive influenza rapid tests, positive virus cultures for influenza and influenza deaths are consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2009 List of Reportable Conditions available at: <http://www.scdhec.gov/administration/library/CR-009025.pdf>

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2009

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region.

Region 1

Anderson, Oconee
220 McGee Road
Anderson, SC 29625
Phone: (864) 260-4358
Fax: (864) 260-5623
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-298-4442

Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Saluda
1736 S. Main Street
Greenwood, SC 29646
Phone: 1-888-218-5475
Fax: (864) 942-3690
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-420-1915

Region 2

Greenville, Pickens
PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 282-4139
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-993-1186

Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union

PO Box 4217
151 E. Wood Street
Spartanburg, SC 29305-4217
Phone: (864) 596-2227, x- 210
Fax: (864) 596-3443
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-993-1186

Region 3

Chester, Lancaster, York
PO Box 817
1833 Pageland Highway
Lancaster, SC 29720
Phone: (803) 286-9948
Fax: (803) 286-5418
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-867-3886

Region 3 (continued)

Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland
2000 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2749
Fax: (803) 576-2993
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-554-9915

Region 4

Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Sumter
PO Box 1628
105 North Magnolia Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: (803) 773-5511
Fax: (803) 775-9941
Nights/Weekends: 1-877-831-4647

Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion

145 E. Cheves Street
Florence, SC 29506
Phone: (843) 661-4830
Fax: (843) 661-4859
Nights / Weekends: (843) 660-8145

Region 5

Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg
PO Box 1126
1550 Carolina Avenue
Orangeburg, SC 29116
Phone: (803) 533-7199
Fax: (803) 533-7134
Nights / Weekends: (803) 954-8513

Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell

1680 Richland Avenue, W. Suite 40
Aiken, SC 29801
Phone: (803) 642-1618
Fax: (803) 643-8386
Nights / Weekends: (803) 827-8668 or
1-800-614-1519

Region 6

Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg
1931 Industrial Park Road
Conway, SC 29526-5482
Phone: (843) 915-8804
Fax: (843) 365-0085
Nights / Weekends: (843) 381-6710

Region 7

Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester
4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600
N. Charleston, SC 29405
Phone: (843) 953-0060
Fax: (843) 953-0051
Nights / Weekends: (843) 219-8470

Region 8

Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper
219 S. Lemacks Street
Walterboro, SC 29488
Phone: (843) 525-5910
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-614-4698

DHEC Bureau of Disease Control Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology

1751 Calhoun Street
Box 101106
Columbia, SC 29211
Phone: (803) 898-0861
Fax: (803) 898-0897
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902



www.scdhec.gov

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.