



NEWS RELEASE

EUROPE REGIONAL MEDICAL COMMAND

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

CMR 442 APO AE 09042
U.S. ARMY HOSPITAL – NACHRICHTEN KASERNE
POSTFACH 103180 69021 HEIDELBERG, GERMANY
DSN 371-3317/3049 TEL. 06221-7-3317/3049
PHIL TEGTMEIER CELL – 0162-256-3574

June 12, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Health officials upgrade H1N1 outbreak to Stage Six

Pandemic announcement has no immediate effect on health care in Europe

HEIDELBERG, Germany - The World Health Organization decision to declare the novel H1N1 influenza outbreak has reached pandemic levels June 11 has no immediate impact on health care operations in the Europe Regional Medical Command, according to leading health experts.

“We continue to track the spread of the disease, and we have sufficient reserves of medications for treating the seriously ill,” said Col. Evelyn Barraza, ERMCC preventive medicine consultant and chief of preventive medicine at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center.

There have been six confirmed cases involving U.S. servicemembers in Europe, she said. Those patients have received treatment and are responding well.

She added that the command continues to follow Centers for Disease Control guidelines. Current guidelines include information on treating the illness for those who suspect they may have contracted the H1N1 influenza.

The CDC notes that if you are sick, you may be ill for a week or longer. You should stay home and avoid contact with other persons, except to seek medical care. If you leave the house to seek medical care, wear a mask or cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. In general you should avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness. At the current time, CDC believes that this virus has the same properties in terms of spread as seasonal flu viruses. With seasonal flu, studies have shown that people may be contagious from one day before they develop symptoms to up to 7 days after they get sick. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

The CDC guidelines say that most people will recover without needing medical care. If you have severe illness or you are at high risk for flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care. Your health care provider will determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed. Be aware that if the flu becomes wide spread, there will be little need to continue testing people, so your health care provider may decide not to test for the flu virus.

Antiviral drugs can be given to treat those who become severely ill with influenza. These antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaler) with activity against influenza viruses, including H1N1 flu virus. These medications must be prescribed by a health care professional.

For updated information, please refer to the CDC guidelines on the CDC Web site at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>