



### **SBE H1N1 Preparedness for November 3, 2009**

The Virginia State Board of Elections (SBE), Voter Registrars of Virginia, and Virginia Electoral Board Association are committed to the integrity, accuracy and efficiency of all elections in Virginia. With this commitment comes a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all Virginians as they exercise their valuable right to vote.

The Virginia election community is aware of the H1N1 pandemic and has made plans to minimize its possible effect on voters this November. A conference call was organized by SBE between electoral board members, general registrars and Dr. Diane Helentjaris of the Virginia Department of Health. Dr. Helentjaris is the Deputy Director of Epidemiology and shared her wealth of knowledge on the topic and suggestions for action on the local level. State agencies have created Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans to maintain productivity levels in the case of emergency and SBE is prepared, as an agency, to carry out its plan if necessary.

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) worked together to generously donate more than 2,000 bottles of hand sanitizing gel for use in polling places. In addition to these bottles, localities have been instructed to carry out a number of precautionary measures in order to minimize the spread of germs and foster public confidence in their ability to vote without being subjected to the virus.

Among the measures taken by many localities in their precincts are:

- Regular cleaning of common surfaces.
- Distribution of hand sanitizer. VDH and CDC supplied one bottle of hand sanitizer for every polling place.
- Arranging precincts to allow for more space between voting booths and voters in line (recommended distance is 6 feet).
- Using Q-tips or disposable coffee stirrers as styluses on DREs to keep fingertips and hands off of the touch screen.
- Recruiting additional backup officers. Having a strike team available in registrar's office in case officers of election call in sick.
- Distributing officers of election so that there is a range of ages. Since younger people are at a higher risk for H1N1, ensure that there are some more senior officers of election are assigned to polling places comprised of overwhelmingly younger voters.
- Educating voters about absentee voting.
- Encouraging registrars to stay in touch with school district and local health district offices.
- Having plenty of trash receptacles to dispose of tissues and cleaning supplies.
- Ensuring IT connectivity for state and local officials who cannot get to office.

The State Board of Elections also distributed a table of symptoms (seen below) for use by localities. Increased knowledge and monitoring of symptoms will allow registrars and precinct chiefs to make more sound decisions regarding the replacement of officers of elections and use of alternates.

<b>Symptom</b>	<b>Cold</b>	<b>H1N1 Flu</b>
<b>Fever</b>	Fever is rare with a cold.	Fever is usually present with the flu in up to 80% of all flu cases. A temperature of 100°F or higher for 3 to 4 days is associated with the flu.
<b>Coughing</b>	A hacking, productive (mucus-producing) cough is often present with a cold.	A non-productive (non-mucus producing) cough is usually present with the flu (sometimes referred to as dry cough).
<b>Aches</b>	Slight body aches and pains can be part of a cold.	Severe aches and pains are common with the flu.
<b>Stuffy Nose</b>	Stuffy nose is commonly present with a cold and typically resolves spontaneously within a week.	Stuffy nose is not commonly present with the flu.
<b>Chills</b>	Chills are uncommon with a cold.	60% of people who have the flu experience chills.
<b>Tiredness</b>	Tiredness is fairly mild with a cold.	Tiredness is moderate to severe with the flu.
<b>Sneezing</b>	Sneezing is commonly present with a cold.	Sneezing is not common with the flu.
<b>Sudden Symptoms</b>	Cold symptoms tend to develop over a few days.	The flu has a rapid onset within 3-6 hours. The flu hits hard and includes sudden symptoms like high fever, aches and pains.
<b>Headache</b>	A headache is fairly uncommon with a cold.	A headache is very common with the flu, present in 80% of flu cases.
<b>Sore Throat</b>	Sore throat is commonly present with a cold.	Sore throat is not commonly present with the flu.
<b>Chest Discomfort</b>	Chest discomfort is mild to moderate with a cold.	Chest discomfort is often severe with the flu.

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