



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

OFFICE OF HEALTH SERVICES

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Sonny Perdue
Governor

Brian Owens
Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

TO: All GDC Employees

As we continue to prepare for the 2009 influenza season, the following provides a brief overview and guidance, to minimize the impact on our correctional environment, and to maintain continuity of operations.

The 2009 H1N1 virus is contagious and, although different, is thought to spread the same as seasonal flu, through respiratory and personal contact. The incubation period is unknown but thought to be 1-4 days. "High-Risk" populations are most at-risk (adults >65 years, chronic diseases, immuno-suppression, pregnancy). Symptoms range from mild to severe (requiring hospitalization) and include fever, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, and/ or vomiting. The severity cannot be predicted with a high degree of certainty but, according to the Governor's Agency for Continuity of Operations Planning, approximately 20% working adults will become ill, 50% of whom will require medical care; absenteeism of approximately 40% may occur during peak activity (which warrants planning for all critical functions).

Considering these facts, the following is presented, as guidance:

- Encourage staff to get "flu shots" for both the seasonal and H1N1 ; inmates will be prioritized according to 'high-risk'
- Encourage staff to plan ahead, in the event that they (or someone in the family) become ill and also plan for child/elder care in the event of school/ daycare closure
- Promote general precautions:
 - cover nose/mouth when you sneeze or cough; throw tissue away in lined trash can
 - wash hands often, with soap and water; dry hands with paper towel, and throw away in lined trash can
 - avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth and avoid hand shaking
 - avoid close contact with others who are sick
 - if you are sick with influenza-like illness (ILI), do not come to work until there is no fever (<100 degrees) for 24 hours

- INTAKE: evaluate all new inmates as they enter your facility and isolate, if sick with influenza-like illness
- INFECTION CONTROL:
 - Soap and water must be readily available, for hand washing
 - Trash liners are to be used, and carefully emptied routinely
 - Eating utensils/ dishes must be washed with hot water (>100 degrees) by hand or dishwasher
 - Bed linens must be washed with hot water and dried on 'hot'
 - Surfaces (kitchen, bathroom, door knobs, telephones, work areas) must be cleaned often, with a disinfectant
 - Post CDC posters throughout each facility/ work area
- VISITATION: Inform inmates to tell visitors not to come to the facility if they have had influenza-like illness within the last 7 days. Visitors will be asked to sign an "Attestation of No Known Influenza Illness" and will be required to wash hands with soap and water, prior to entering the visitation area. Visits are not to be allowed without signed attestation or observed handwashing. Provisions will need to be made for handwashing and disposal of paper towels.
- If cases of known/probable/suspect H1N1 Influenza-Like Illness occur:
 - Instruct staff to notify the Warden/ DWCT/ DWS
 - Minimize movement of staff and inmates between buildings
 - Inmates with known/probable /suspect H1N1 must be cleared by the Medical staff for transport outside the facility (including review of elective procedures or physician office visits)
 - If transport of an inmate with ILI is necessary, officers should wear a disposable face mask
 - Face masks are recommended for all staff in proximity to any patient with known, probable, or suspected H1N1 or Influenza-like illness, including those that provide direct medical care and all support activities (i.e. delivering meal tray or cleaning patient's room)
 - Identify and designate an area (dorm, group of cells, etc) for inmates that have known/probable or suspect H1N1
- **Notify GDC Statewide Medical Director and the Office of Health Services of all known/probable/suspect cases of H1N1 (staff and inmates)**

As always, please do not hesitate contacting me with questions or concerns.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sharon Lewis, M.D.
Statewide Medical Director