



**Grant County Health District – Always Working for a Healthier and Safer Grant County**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 09/04/2009**

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT**

**TO:** Grant County:  
Healthcare Emergencies Alliance  
Healthcare Providers  
EMS Providers  
Emergency Rooms/Walk-In Clinics

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**WSU Influenza Outbreak on Campus: Grant County May Experience an Increase in Patients with Influenza-Like Illness**

Grant County Health District is sending this release because the events described below may impact the Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) trend within your practice, emergency rooms, and urgent care sites, as well as our community at large.

**Whitman County**

Since August 21, Washington State University (WSU) has been experiencing an outbreak of influenza on campus. There have been approximately 20 people with positive RDTs. Samples for H1N1 sub-typing are pending at the State PHL.

Last week, the Health and Wellness Service (HWS) at WSU saw an average of 50 students a day for ILI. This week HWS is seeing almost 100 students a day with ILI. Most students with ILI have had fever, cough and sore throat. Most respond well to acetaminophen. The illness generally lasts no more than three days in healthy students, while asthmatics take 4-5 days to recover.

HWS has been encouraging self-treatment and self-isolation. No students have been hospitalized although several have needed hydration therapy.

The weekend of August 29, 2009 Pullman clinics and the emergency room at Pullman Regional Hospital experienced a sharp increase in ILI illnesses.

- Evaluated over 200 patients with ILI.
- ER reports a 50% increase in patients seen for ILI.
- Local healthcare providers are getting more calls and visits.
- Two Pullman area residents have been hospitalized, both from the same family. One had asthma, and the other pneumonia. Interestingly, one was positive for Influenza A on RDT, the other was negative.
- Yesterday a positive RDT for Influenza A on an 8 year old was noted.

With the identification of Influenza A in a school age child, it is expected that the virus will spread rapidly in the public schools. Whitman County public health officials are meeting with school superintendents again tomorrow to go over infection control procedures and other implications of widespread influenza.

**Grant County**

Grant County Health District officials have likewise been meeting with local public and private school officials to support preparations for the presence of this pandemic illness.

Healthcare settings in Grant County may be seeing students who have come back home from WSU for the holiday weekend, or family members and other close contacts who have been infected, or and increase of others within our community who demonstrate ILI symptoms.

The Washington State Public Health Laboratory continues to provide routine testing of flu specimens in cases of:

- Unexplained death due to unexplained respiratory illness, respiratory failure, or pneumonia;
- Hospitalization for severe respiratory illness with positive influenza A screening test;
- Healthcare workers with ILI and positive influenza A screening test;
- Pregnant women with ILI and positive influenza A screening test.

The Grant County Health District should be notified prior to a healthcare provider sending a specimen to the Public Health Laboratory.

Additionally, local health jurisdictions have the option to submit specimens from patients who do not fit within this algorithm, including specimens from persons associated with outbreaks.

View the testing algorithm at: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphl/Epidemiology/CD/swineflu/sflu-testalg.pdf>

**Please notify the Grant County Health District at 766-7960, or after-hours 398-2083, if you have questions or need to report influenza testing.**

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