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Two probable cases of H1N1 (swine) flu now confirmed in Sarasota County

Earlier today during a news conference, Sarasota County Health Department officials announced two probable cases of H1N1 (swine) influenza. As of this afternoon, those two probable cases were confirmed as positive for H1N1 (swine) flu. "The short turnaround time is the result of the State of Florida laboratories now having the capability of testing samples to confirm H1N1 (swine) flu," said Scott Pritchard, county epidemiologist.

As released earlier today, the individuals are males, ages two and ten. Both children have been under the care of a physician. Neither child was hospitalized. The older child is now back at Tuttle Elementary School in Sarasota. As announced earlier today, there are no plans for any school closures. Local health officials are continually monitoring for any additional cases of influenza-like illness in the county.

To reinforce comments made earlier today, "we must all do our part to reduce the spread of this infection. Everyone is encouraged to get prepared at home, find out about plans at your job, and take steps to protect yourself, your family and the community. Use the same judgment you would use during a typical flu season," says Pritchard.

The H1N1 (swine) flu is a respiratory infection that can spread from person to person when someone coughs and sneezes. **People are urged to follow the same precautions as outlined earlier today when the probable cases were announced:**

- Wash hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand cleaners to reduce the spread of respiratory illness.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Avoid close contact with people who are coughing or otherwise appear ill.
- People with a cough, fever of 100 degrees or higher and fatigue, possibly along with diarrhea and vomiting, should contact their health care provider.

If you think you have influenza, please call your health care provider and discuss whether you need to be seen in their office or emergency department or stay home.

For more information, visit www.sarasotahealth.org. For flu information in Sarasota County, call the Flu Information Line at 941-861-2800. For further information in Florida, call toll-free, 1-800-342-3557, or the State of Florida TDD at 1-800- 226-4329. You may

also visit a health kiosk at all Sarasota libraries and Senior Friendship Centers throughout Sarasota County.

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