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Munarhiliqiyikkut Inuuhiriknirmullu

Department of Health and Social Services

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

News Release

New cases of H1N1 Flu Virus in Nunavut

IQALUIT, Nunavut (June 8, 2009) - Minister of Health Tagak Curley and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Isaac Sobol, today confirmed 19 new cases of H1N1 flu virus, bringing the total number of laboratory confirmed cases in Nunavut to 25, five of whom have been hospitalized.

"Fortunately, the H1N1 virus remains relatively mild in nature - with its affects being very similar to any other type of flu," said Minister Curley. "All of the patients from Nunavut have been, or are being treated, and all are recovering."

Nunavut's cases are not from any one single community. Today's case count includes new cases reported in both the Kitikmeot and Kivalliq Regions.

Since Nunavut's first case was lab-confirmed on May 28, health care workers throughout the territory have been testing every patient who seeks medical care for influenza-like-symptoms in order to determine how wide-spread the virus is in Nunavut.

"The increased number of confirmed cases is due, in part, to increased surveillance," said Dr. Sobol. "The results are precisely what we expected – H1N1 flu virus is well established in Nunavut as it is in the rest of Canada."

The H1N1 flu virus is similar to other seasonal flu viruses that affect Nunavummiut every year – the transmission and treatment are exactly the same.

"I ask Nunavummiut to take steps to stop the spread of this flu virus," stressed Minister Curley. "I know this is a season of gathering for communities. There are graduations, fishing derbies, and other important events but it is very important to stay at home if you are sick."

Take the following steps to help stop the spread of the flu virus:

- Stay home if you're sick, unless directed to seek medical care
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly or use hand sanitizer
- Keep common surfaces and items (telephones, counters, door handles) clean and disinfected
- Cough and sneeze in your arm, not your hand

Across Canada there were 308 new lab-confirmed cases of H1N1 flu virus reported between June 3 and June 5; bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 2,115. Three deaths have occurred in Canada since the outbreak in late April.

In Nunavut and across Canada most of the cases have been mild and most of the individuals have recovered at home without prescribed medication or medical intervention.

Flu-like symptoms can include fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, body aches, fatigue, lack of appetite, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

For the latest information on the flu virus, visit www.fightflu.ca

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