

## MEMORANDUM UPDATE

To: North Shore-LIJ Physicians

From: Lawrence G. Smith, MD  
Chief Medical Officer

Michael J. Dowling  
President & CEO

Re: Swine Flu Response

Date: May 19, 2009

As you may know, the emergency departments of hospitals across the North Shore-LIJ Health System have seen an influx of patients concerned about possible exposure to Swine Flu. In response, the health system has activated its Emergency Operations Plan, which coordinates all emergency response plans across the health system, including all of our hospitals, ambulatory care centers and other facilities.

As part of this process, we are monitoring the symptoms of all patients presenting to our emergency departments, using an electronic surveillance system called "First Watch" that alerts us to any spikes in emergency cases. The health system also has been working closely with health officials in the City of New York, the State of New York, Nassau and Suffolk counties, as well as the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

We have adjusted our guidelines along with these authorities. The highlighted changes are the following:

1. For the routine care of patients with suspected influenza, a **surgical mask** is the appropriate PPE for hospital personnel. An **N95 respirator** should be utilized in those circumstances where aerosolization of the virus may occur. (see guidelines below)
2. Routine testing (nasal pharyngeal swab) is **NOT recommended** or necessary for patients with mild influenza-like illness. Only patients with severe symptoms of an acute, febrile respiratory illness who require hospitalization should be tested.
3. **Pregnancy** is NOT a contraindication for the use of oseltamivir and zanamavir (see section VII for further recommendations)

Because of extensive media coverage of the eight Swine Flu cases that originated at St. Francis Preparatory School in Fresh Meadows, many people are becoming worried and going to our EDs. Nearly all of the cases have been mild and have not required hospitalization.

To safeguard the health of all direct patient caregivers, we are recommending the use of standard universal precautions when providing care to infected individuals, such as N-95 face masks, gowns and gloves, as well as goggles based on clinical indications.

This is obviously an evolving situation and protocols continue to change. For the most recent protocols and other updates, please go to North Shore-LIJ's intranet -- HealthPort.