

Local Emergency Managers Prep for Swine Flu

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Erik Wander/KMXT

Although no cases of swine flu have been reported in Alaska thus far, state and local emergency planning groups are mobilizing in preparation for a possible outbreak.

A teleconference sponsored by the Alaska Department of Health and Human Services was held Wednesday. Duane Dvorak, associate planner with the Kodiak Island Borough's Community Development Department, took part in the teleconference. He said the state is taking the lead on Alaska's response to a potential swine flu threat, and advising local communities on preparedness. He said that commonly known preventative measures bear repeating until more specific response measures can be determined.

-- (Dvorak 1 42 sec. "They are coordinating with ... transmitted through contact.")

Dvorak said the World Health Organization's normal threat level for seasonal influenza generally ranges from one to three, but that it recently raised the threat level to four. As a result, Kodiak's Emergency Services Counsel and the Local Emergency Planning Committee will hold a special meeting Thursday (today) to discuss contingency plans at the local level. Dvorak hopes to involve local government officials, the Coast Guard, State Troopers and health care providers in the meeting.

-- (Dvorak 2 40 sec. "Those are the folks who ... as this sort of plays out.")

Dvorak said the borough is in the initial stages of implementing the Kodiak Pandemic Influenza Annex, which was a plan adopted in January. He said contingency plans for a possible swine flu threat in the area are in pre-planning stages.

-- (Dvorak 3 33 sec. "So this is really going to ... these plans will mesh together.")

According to the Alaska Department of Health and Human Services, no confirmed cases of swine flu

have been reported in the state. The W.H.O. is reporting that nine countries have officially reported 148 cases of the A/H1N1 virus, as its known, and that the U.S. government has reported 91 laboratory confirmed cases, with one death. The state of Alaska has about 80,000 courses of antiviral medications in a state stockpile, and DHSS has ordered approximately 20,000 additional courses, which it expects to arrive in about a week.

I'm
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