

Alaska's First Swine Flu Case is in Fairbanks

Thursday, 28 May 2009

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/090528.swineflukuac.mp3{/audio}

Dan Bross/KUAC

Alaska has its first case of swine flu. The influenza A-H1N1 virus has been confirmed at the state virology lab in Fairbanks. State Department of Health and Social Service spokesman Greg Wilkinson says it's unclear how the patient, a middle aged woman from Fairbanks became infected.

Wilkinson says the woman has recovered from the flu and is no longer contagious, but he could not say anything about her profession, and how many people she may have come in contact with while she was sick. He says over 500 samples have been tested at the state virology lab since the swine flu outbreak began, but that it's possible the virus has circulated undetected in Alaska. With today's confirmation of a case, Wilkinson says the state is taking precautions, and has contacted health providers in Fairbanks.

Tamiflu has proven affective as a preventative measure against swine flu as well as a treatment for flu symptoms. Fairbanks Borough Emergency Services Director David Gibbs says area health officials are meeting to discuss the situation, and urged residents to practice good hygiene and not panic.

The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention reports over 7,900 cases of swine flu in the U.S. Eleven deaths are attributed to the disease nationwide. With Alaska's confirmation of a case, West Virginia is the only U.S. state that has not reported occurrence of the disease.