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MEMORANDUM

TO: Healthcare Providers

FROM: James B. Crucetti, MD, MPH
Commissioner of Health

DATE: May 4, 2009 at 9:00 a.m.

RE: **H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu) Informational Update**

In an effort to provide information to you as quickly as possible to respond to the many questions we have been receiving about H1N1 influenza testing, on Friday we faxed a guidance document to you entitled: "Algorithm to assist in decision on testing and treatment for H1N1 (swine flu) Virus."

This was sent before it was noted that the algorithm is incomplete (reference to footnote #4 is not clear). Moreover, as this is a federal guidance document it does not include NYS requirements that providers must consult with Local Health Departments prior to obtaining specimens for H1N1 testing.

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL REQUESTS FOR H1N1 TESTING OF ALBANY COUNTY RESIDENTS MUST BE REVIEWED WITH OUR OFFICE OF EPIDEMIOLOGY AT 447-4640 DURING BUSINESS HOURS AND 447-4614 AFTER HOURS.

We will continue to make every effort to provide you with updated information on H1N1 response activities based upon national and state recommendations. Our department has created a provider link on our website that will contain information updated daily. You can access this site at: www.albanycounty.com/health and click on the "H1N1 Flu Update" link on the left side of the page in the box headed Notices & Alerts. Then click on "Information for Providers."

UPDATES:

- THERE ARE NO CONFIRMED CASES OF H1N1 INFLUENZA IN ALBANY COUNTY AS OF THIS WRITING. Five cases have been sent for H1N1 testing thus far, four are negative and one is still pending as it was just sent yesterday.
- Surveillance information of local schools indicates no unusual clusters of influenza-like illness at this time.
- Surveillance information of hospitals in Albany County indicates no unusual influenza-like illness at this time.
- Pharmacy surveillance indicated no spike in prescriptions for antiviral medication.

I have asked our Medical Director, Dr. Liza Whalen (447-4692), to provide regular updates to you as this H1N1 outbreak investigation continues and to work with our Health Education staff to keep our provider site updated daily. Please don't hesitate to contact her or me, in addition to staff in our Office of Epidemiology (447-4640), if you have questions.

Thank you for your ongoing assistance.