



## District 2 Public Health

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Banks, Dawson, Forsyth, Franklin, Habersham, Hall, Hart, Lumpkin, Rabun, Stephens, Towns, Union and White Counties

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS AGREE TO FOLLOW CDC GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS

GAINESVILLE – The Georgia Division of Public Health has reported three cases of confirmed H1N1 influenza in Georgia. On May 4, 2009 H1N1 was confirmed in a student in Henry County. On May 5, two additional confirmed cases were announced – one in Cobb County and one in DeKalb County. This brings the total number of cases to three Georgia residents that were confirmed this week, and one out-of-state resident that was confirmed last week on April 30. The out-of state resident continues to recover in LaGrange (GA). All of the patients appear to be recovering normally.

“It is likely that we will have more cases in Georgia or even in our area,” said David Westfall, M.D., District 2 Public Health Director. “We have only begun to experience confirmed cases in Georgia and experts feel that we will see more as the laboratory capacity for specimen testing is increased and more test results are released. We are encouraged that, so far, the symptoms of the illness have been fairly mild and most patients have been able to recover at home. The pattern that we are seeing is similar to that seen with seasonal influenza. However, that doesn’t mean that we should let our guard down as far as personal prevention is concerned. As always – frequent hand washing, covering coughs or sneezes, and avoiding attending work or school if sick - are still indicated.”

Health experts and school officials across the nation have learned more each day about the characteristics of this virus. Based on this new information, on May 5 the CDC revised its guidance for

school closings. The Hall County School System, Gainesville City School System and District 2 Public Health have been in consultation and have agreed to follow these new CDC recommendations:

- CDC no longer recommends that communities or schools with a laboratory-confirmed case of influenza H1N1 close schools or daycare facilities. Schools previously closed may reopen.
- Students, faculty or staff with influenza-like illness (fever with a cough or sore throat) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care for at least 7 days, even if symptoms resolve sooner.
- Schools should focus on early identification of ill students and staff and send them home.
- Schools should utilize this event as an opportunity to educate students, staff and parents on good hygiene practices, which include covering coughs and sneezes, washing hands, and cleaning common surfaces that may harbor germs.

Public Health will continue to monitor the situation, and will issue revisions to these guidelines if indicated. Those interested in more information are invited to visit [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu).