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CONTACT: Alexis Marks or Mara Lee
(202)225-7163

Rep. Doris Matsui Statement and Information on Swine Flu

Washington, D.C. - Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA – 05) issued the following statement today in response to news of three confirmed cases of swine flu in Sacramento County:

“The presence of swine flu in Sacramento is a cause for concern, but not for panic. Public health authorities at the federal, state, and county levels have taken immediate and appropriate action to address confirmed cases of this flu strain in our region, and I applaud them for their quick and thorough response. I am continuing to work hand-in-hand with the Obama administration, with the Sacramento County Department of Public Health, with my colleagues on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure that public health authorities are taking every step necessary to protect the health and safety of the American people.

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released one-quarter of its stockpile of antiviral drugs, personal protective equipment, and respiratory protection devices to help our state combat the spread of swine flu. These are some—but by no means all—of the tools that our government has at its disposal to battle this new influenza strain, and I will continue to do all I can to ensure that Sacramento’s public health authorities have the resources they need to keep Sacramentans safe and healthy. Closing St. Mel’s School yesterday was an appropriate local response to this contagion, and I continue to support the Sacramento officials who are acting cautiously and responsibly to protect our region’s students and families.

“Fortunately, Sacramento County now has the capacity to test for swine flu without sending samples to the state’s public health lab or to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. California has moved quickly to place disaster assistance medical teams in the event that a rapid-response capability is needed. The state also boasts three mobile field hospitals that will be helpful in addressing swine flu, one of which is located in Sacramento.

“The federal government and the Sacramento region have worked tirelessly in recent years to prepare for a potential pandemic flu outbreak. Despite this, our ability to deal with this sort of threat to the public health depends greatly on Sacramentans being smart about flu prevention, on the strength and capability of our public health workforce, and on the competence and excellence of our doctors and of our scientific community. I have the utmost faith and trust in the Sacramento region’s many public health experts, but I nonetheless urge everyone in Sacramento to be personally vigilant in following recommended procedures and treatments that

will help us stop swine flu before it spreads any further.”

Federal and local governmental entities have released a suite of information tools and guides to help people in Sacramento and across the country avoid contracting and spreading swine flu:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is continually updating its website to help Americans learn about and respond to swine flu. This information is available at:
http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/general_info.htm.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has posted and is continually updating an entirely separate website dedicated to swine and pandemic flu. This website can be reached by visiting: <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>.

A list of everyday preventive actions people can take to help protect themselves from contracting swine flu is available by visiting: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>.

The U.S. Department of Education has offered guidance to schools about how to respond to swine flu, available at:
<http://www.edgovblogs.org/duncan/2009/04/public-health-officials-offer-swine-flu-guidance-to-schools/>.

California Superintendent Jack O’Connell has provided a free download, “Keep Our Schools Healthy” guide, which is available in several languages. To download the toolkit, please visit: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/148645>.

The Sacramento County Department of Public Health has dedicated a separate portion of its website to swine flu as well, available by visiting:
<http://www.sacdhhs.com/article.asp?ContentID=1995>.

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