

THE 2009-H1N1 INFLUENZA VIRUS: A GLOBAL CHALLENGE



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"We have established an influenza monitoring group... We are tracking how other governments are responding to the threat and what assistance we might offer. We are constantly reviewing and refining our advice to Americans traveling or living abroad."

– Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

President Barack Obama announced in September 2009 that the United States is acting aggressively to confront the spread of the pandemic 2009-H1N1 influenza and will make as much as 10 percent of our H1N1 vaccine supply available to other countries through the World Health Organization (WHO).

U.S. Consular Officers overseas:

- Respond to inquiries from family members of American citizens abroad
- Identify quarantined Americans through local authorities and maintain contact with them
- Provide information to Americans traveling and residing abroad

The plan, a blueprint for comprehensive interagency cooperation, designates the U.S. Department of State as the lead agency to coordinate international efforts. The Department is leading or supporting more than 80 of the over 300 actions mandated in the plan.

The United States is taking this action in concert with many other donor countries. We will provide the H1N1 vaccine to WHO on a rolling basis as vaccine supplies become available, to assist countries without direct access to the vaccine.

A Global Health Risk

The timing, spread and severity of 2009-H1N1 virus are uncertain. But millions of people around the world have already been affected, thousands have died, and the virus continues to spread across international borders.

Global Preparation

Together, all countries must strengthen readiness and resiliency in their health care systems and improve national pandemic response plans. The United States is working with WHO, the United Nations System Influenza Coordinator and others in the international community to help enhance health and response capacity in the developing world.

Interagency Coordination

The National Security Council coordinates interagency efforts responding to the H1N1 outbreak. With the release of the Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza in May 2006, the White House identified the prevention and containment of pandemic flu overseas, with its potential spread to the United States, as a high foreign policy objective.

International Organizations Collaboration

The State Department is working with:

- *The World Health Organization* to expand access to vaccines and assist countries to develop and test national plans.
- *The World Organization for Animal Health* to analyze countries' capacities to deal with diseases that can pass between animals and humans.
- *The International Partnership on Avian and Pandemic Influenza (IPAPI)* to raise awareness about H1N1 and address unmet needs.

Americans Abroad

The State Department is closely monitoring the status of Americans abroad and has issued Warden Messages and Travel Alerts to inform Americans about screening and quarantine procedures in many countries, including China and Cuba.

Other Worldwide Outreach

- The United States publishes information on the 2009 H1N1 influenza in English, Spanish, Chinese, and other languages on www.flu.gov.
- The State Department has funded influenza outreach training for more than 500 journalists from around the world, collaborating with the Voice of America, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and non-governmental organizations.