
CITY OF BALTIMORE

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Olivia D. Farrow, Esq., R.S.,
Interim Commissioner
1001 E. Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

CONTACT: Rianna Brown
PHONE: 410-396-1147
mediahealth@baltimorecity.gov

Mayor and Health Department Convene Panel of Experts To Advise on Swine Flu Preparedness

BALTIMORE, MD (May 1, 2009) — As part of Baltimore City's planning for pandemic influenza, Mayor Sheila Dixon and Interim Commissioner of Health, Olivia D. Farrow, convened a panel of local and national experts to discuss latest developments concerning Swine Flu. Swine influenza ("flu") infection in humans has been reported in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and other countries.

"While there are currently no confirmed cases of Swine Flu in Baltimore City, it is critical that we begin planning now," states Mayor Dixon. "This meeting today is just one part of the City's larger efforts to ensure that we are well prepared to meet this public health challenge."

Under the Baltimore City Pandemic Influenza Plan, an expert panel may be convened to advise the Health Department on its preparedness response.

During the panel discussion, recommendations for measures to reduce the spread of influenza were considered. Some of these measures included:

- Methods to promote strict public hygiene routines at workplaces, public establishments, and at home;
- Policies for school or institutional closures;
- Enhanced coordination of Health Department and community clinical services and triage protocols; and
- The Mayor's and Health Commissioner's legal authority in public health emergencies.

"We want to reassure Baltimore citizens that as we continue to work with state and federal officials on this issue, we take seriously the coordination and implementation of an effective response to the current outbreak", said interim commissioner Olivia Farrow.

Panelists included:

- Dr. Trish Perl – Professor-FAC, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
- Ruth Karron – Professor and Director of the Center for Immunization Research, Johns Hopkins Vaccine Initiative
- Amy Major – University of Maryland Center for Health and Homeland Security
- Jon Links – Director, Johns Hopkins Center for Public Health Preparedness
- James King – Professor of Pediatrics, University of Maryland Medical Center

Additional information on swine flu is available by calling the City information number – 311 – and on the Baltimore City Health Department’s website: www.baltimorehealth.org

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