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Mayor Dixon Outlines City Strategy for H1N1 Flu Precautions

Baltimore, MD (May 6, 2009) – With the recent reports of H1N1 influenza (swine flu), Mayor Sheila Dixon today joined Baltimore City Health Department Interim Commissioner Olivia D. Farrow and Dr. Andres Alonso, CEO of Baltimore City Public Schools Systems, to update the public on city efforts underway to prepare for potential cases of H1N1 influenza.

“As cases are confirmed in neighboring jurisdictions, it is becoming clearer that in the coming days, cases may be confirmed in Baltimore,” said Mayor Dixon. “But, while we are concerned about H1N1, we remain confident that the City is well prepared to meet this challenge.”

H1N1 influenza (“flu”) infection in humans has been reported in the U.S. and around the world. U.S. cases have been mild. To date, only four confirmed cases have been reported in Maryland. No cases have been confirmed in Baltimore City.

“Citizens can rest assured that plans are in place to address the H1N1 flu situation in Baltimore City,” said Interim Commissioner Farrow. “The Health Department is working with each City agency, area hospitals and health care providers to develop a coordinated and comprehensive H1N1 flu plan.”

The Baltimore City Health Department is recommending that citizens follow simple steps to keep themselves healthy:

- Wash your hands often and well with soap and warm water for a minimum of 20 seconds OR use portable alcohol-based hand wash solutions,
- Practice good cough hygiene: cover your cough or sneeze with a clean tissue or cough/sneeze into the crook of your arm; throw the used tissue away and wash your hands,
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes since this can pass infection.

If you are sick with the symptoms of flu (fever, chills, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches):

- Stay home and rest - don't go to school, work, or social events,

- Drink lots of fluids,
- Rather than going to the emergency room, call your doctor if you have any symptoms or concerns.

The current H1N1 situation is a top priority of the Mayor's administration and the Baltimore City Health Department. Additional information 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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