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NEW YORK
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Press Release
For Immediate Release

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Swine Flu

The number of H1N1 swine flu cases reported has been increasing daily, with a cluster of cases in Fresh Meadows, Queens and possible cases in New Jersey, as well as a death in a 23-month old baby in Texas. Dr. Warren Chin, Vice President of the Chinese American Medical Society (CAMS) and Chairman of Public Relations announced that CAMS will hold a joint press conference with the Chinese American Independent Practice Association (CAIPA) today to notify our community that there is no cause for panic and to clear up any misconceptions about swine flu. Unlike with SARS, there are measures we can take to prevent swine flu as treatment is available. A panel of medical leaders in the community will discuss and answer any questions that members of the community and media may have.

Dr. Su Wang of the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center reports that as of Wednesday April 29, 2009 the Center for Disease Control announced that there have been 91 confirmed cases of Swine Flu in the United States. 51 of those cases were in New York City. The majority were students from St. Francis Preparatory High School in Fresh Meadow, Queens, and the others reported travel to Mexico. The majority of cases had mild illness. There are suspected cases at other schools, but these have not been confirmed.

Swine flu is a type of influenza virus common to pigs. People do not normally get Swine flu, but human infection can occur. Most cases involve persons that have had direct contact with pigs, although person to person transmission has been reported. Dr. Wilson Ko, President of the Chinese American Medical Society, says that like with regular seasonal flu viruses, it can be transmitted through coughing and sneezing, or touching something that has the flu virus on it and then touching their mouths, eyes, or noses.

Dr. Rex Wu, Associate Chief of Medicine and Medical Director of the Chinese Community Partnership for Health at New York Downtown Hospital, says that as during cold and flu season, the best ways to stay healthy are:

- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing. You can cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow. Always throw your tissue in the garbage after you use it.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. You can also use an alcohol based hand cleaner.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- If you are sick, you should limit your contact with others to avoid infecting them.

Swine flu cannot be transmitted through eating pork or pork products, but make sure your pork is cooked thoroughly.

Dr. Ko also says that symptoms of Swine flu are very similar to symptoms of seasonal flu which include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Some people have also reported diarrhea and vomiting. If you experience severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, chest or abdominal pain, sudden dizziness, or persistent vomiting, you should seek immediate medical attention. The test for swine flu consists of a nasal swab, and at this time can only be done at the laboratories of the Centers for Disease Control . Testing has been limited to when people experience severe symptoms or are part of sick clusters like the St. Francis Preparatory High School students and employees. The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene does not recommend testing for all flu patients.

Dr. George Liu, President of the Chinese American Independent Practice Association, says that at this time there is no vaccine for Swine flu. The seasonal flu vaccine does not protect people against swine flu which makes precautions such as covering your mouth when you cough and washing your hand frequently very important. There are only 2 classes of antiviral medications approved for treatment and prevention of influenza infection: Tamiflu (oseltamivir) and Relenza (zanamivir). particularly in people with severe illness or with risk factors for complications from flu. The Center for Disease Control instructed physicians not to over-prescribe Tamiflu for patients with mild symptoms because of resistance that people could develop against the antiviral drugs and would make it difficult to treat in the future. Antiviral medications should only be used for people with severe illness and to treat swine flu among those at risk of complications from flu, such as young children, and people with chronic medical conditions. It can also be used to prevent those exposed to confirmed or likely cases.