First Confirmed Swine Flu (A/SWH1) Case in Grays Harbor

Local News

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Grays Harbor received confirmation of its first report of A/SWH1 - or "swine flu" - late Wednesday. The 14-year-old Hoquiam resident was ill in early May and has since recovered. The child was tested by a local physician and it took about one week for the test results to be confirmed. The child was kept out of school during most of the illness, which will help decrease the risk of exposure. "There is no need to close schools at this point ," said Dr. John Bausher, local health officer. "This continues to be a mild illness, like regular influenza, and we do not close schools for that. Parents of all school aged children are advised to keep children home if they have a fever or other signs of illness."Local health officials stress that this case report was very much expected. New counties have been added to the map of known places for the new flu in recent days, as the state's count has risen. To date, the state lab has received 1651 samples and tested 1312. Of these, 493 have been positive. The virus has been reported in 15 counties, counting Grays Harbor, but the number of counties are expected to increase, as samples are submitted from around the state. The majority of cases have been in King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties.

"People do not need to do anything differently that we have advised so far", said Michelle Balter, Clinical Services Manager for the health department, "Stay home if you are ill. Wash your hands often. Cover your cough. If you have a fever and are concerned, contact your healthcare provider. Be sure to call in advance so that if they need to see you, they can minimize everyone's chance of exposure." One thing that has surprised health officials is the amount of seasonal flu circulating this late in the year, a time when flu is normally tapering off. So, not all flu is the new strain.The health department has a swine flu web page that can be seen at: http://kbkw.com/modules/Desktop/www.ghphss.org The site contains basic information about the flu and links to state and national websites. Dr. Bausher has asked physicians to report suspect cases of the A/SWH1 to the health department's notifiable disease line in order to monitor the potential number of cases.