The following is an excerpt about swine flu with diagnosis and treatment recommendations. Hope this is helpful as our offices are receiving multiple calls from those we serve:

As of April 26, 2009, there have been 20 confirmed human cases of Swine Influenza (H1N1) in the United States. Investigations are ongoing to determine the source of the infection and whether additional people have been infected with swine influenza viruses. The United States has declared the swine flu outbreak a public health emergency.

Swine Influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses; swine flu causes regular outbreaks in pigs. People do not normally get swine flu, but human infections can and do happen. Swine flu viruses have been reported to spread from person-to-person, but until now this transmission was limited and not sustained beyond three people. The H1N1 swine flu viruses are antigenically very different from human H1N1 viruses and, therefore, vaccines for human seasonal flu will not provide protection from H1N1 swine flu viruses.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are working very closely with officials in states where human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) have been identified, as well as with health officials in Mexico, Canada and the World Health Organization. The CDC has activated its Emergency Operations Center to coordinate this investigation.

Additionally, the CDC is currently recommending the following for health care providers:

- Clinicians should consider the possibility of swine influenza virus infections in patients presenting with febrile respiratory illness.
  - If swine flu is suspected, clinicians should obtain a respiratory swab for swine influenza testing and place it in a refrigerator (not a freezer). Once collected, the clinician should contact their state or local health department to facilitate transport and timely diagnosis at a state public health laboratory.
  - There are four different antiviral drugs that are licensed for use in the US for the treatment of influenza: amantadine, rimantadine, oseltamivir and zanamivir. While most swine influenza viruses have been susceptible to all four drugs, the most recent swine influenza viruses isolated from humans are resistant to amantadine and rimantadine. At this time, the CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with swine influenza viruses.
  - Vigorous hand washing practices should be used by clinicians and clinicians should instruct and encourage proper hand washing techniques among all of their patients.

Updates to follow.

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