

National Influenza Committee Guidelines for Churches on the Flu

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health

http://www.bigmedicine.ca/americas.htm#1104_Protecting_pets_from_illness_#ixzz0WOXqkLMq

Saint Lucia National Influenza Plan is available at www.tiny.cc/nip

Past Guidelines in the series are available at...

<http://stlucia.gov.lc/flu/guidelines.htm>

This document provides interim guidance on suggested means to reduce the spread of the novel influenza A (H1N1) virus. Recommendations are interim based on current knowledge of the H1N1 outbreak, and may be revised as more information becomes available.

Background

In May 2009 the World Health Organisation designated H1N1 as a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern" and the virus has lived up to its description. As the National Flu Committee deepens its response to this flu, Saint Lucians are called upon to partner with the Committee.

The risk of transmission of pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus may be spread due to increased proximity and sometimes prolonged contact between people in an enclosed environment.



This guidance will address general recommendations that apply to all programs and some specific guidance that applies to programs that are residential.

At this time, CDC recommends the primary means to reduce spread of influenza focuses on early identification of the ill. This includes the cooperation of all by staying home and away from others (including pets) when ill, conducting good cough and hand hygiene etiquette, and environmental controls that encourage use of these hygiene practices.

Novel Influenza A (H1N1)

The symptoms of influenza usually include fever plus at least either cough or sore throat. These symptoms are often referred to as an influenza-like illness (ILI). Influenza infection can also lead to additional symptoms like headache, tiredness, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, chills, diarrhea, and vomiting. Like seasonal flu, novel influenza A (H1N1) infection in humans can vary in severity from mild to severe. When severe, pneumonia, respiratory failure and even death are possible.

Novel influenza A (H1N1) is thought to spread in the same way that seasonal influenza virus spread, mainly through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with the virus. People may also become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Guidelines for Churches on the Flu

In May 2009 the World Health Organisation declared the H1N1 Flu Virus as a Public Health Disease of International Concern and elevated the pandemic level to that of Phase 6. Phase 6 means that almost every country in the World has reported cases of the Flu Virus.

Since then, many Churches with Overseas Headquarters [e.g. the Anglican Church see below.] have issued instructions to their Elders, Pastors, and Priests.

The National Influenza Committee takes this opportunity to encourage Religious Leaders of all denominations and faiths to follow these instructions which include:

- stop the shaking hands and hugs,
- suspension of the sharing of the chalice amongst priests or with the congregation,
- hygiene to be of the highest levels with washing of hands or use of sanitizers

The Chief Medical Officer has not announced any social distancing to the Nation; however the proactive instructions issued from Church Overseas Headquarters to their Local Church can only assist with stopping the spread of the flu.

Thus with immediate effect the National Influenza Committee is requesting the cooperation of all Faith Based Organisations and their members in Saint Lucia to partner with the National Influenza Committee and help to stop the spread of the virus by complying with the advice.



REMEMBER YOUR BEST DEFENSE IS YOU.

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Further Resources

- Homepage – <http://stlucia.gov.lc/flu>
- Saint Lucia National Influenza Plan – <http://www.tiny.cc/nip>
- Saint Lucia National Emergency Management Plan: <http://stlucia.gov.lc/nemp>
- CDEMA Media Kit for the Caribbean
http://stlucia.gov.lc/nemp/sector_plans/MediaKit.pdf
- Anglican Church instructions on the Flu - <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/swineflu>
- Methodist Church instructions on Flu -
http://www.networkyarmouth.co.uk/Articles/162263/Network_Yarmouth/Action_Zones/Social_Action/Swine_flu_guidance.aspx
- Roman Catholic Church instructions on the Flu - <http://www.sacredheart-church.org/flu-advice/>
- Seventh Day Adventist Church instructions on the Flu -
<http://www.bu.adventist.org/index.php/news/38-fp-items/182-zechariah>