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Dear Camp Administrators:

The purpose of this letter is to clarify the current Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's (LACDPH) policy on reporting and investigating flu-like illnesses occurring at camps in Los Angeles County. We realize that you may be reading or hearing in the media conflicting information regarding how to respond when people in your care (including children and staff) develop a flu-like illness. LACDPH is the local expert authority on public health issues in the LA County area. Our flu guidance for camps is very similar to the guidance we have already provided for LA-area schools ([www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Diseases/Swine.htm](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Diseases/Swine.htm)).

It is important to note that, to date, cases of the new flu (novel influenza A H1N1, commonly called "swine flu") have been mostly mild and similar to regular seasonal flu. Nearly all of the cases have gotten better without complications and without the need to see a doctor or be treated with anything other than over-the-counter medications. But the virus is continuing to spread and we can expect it to continue to cause illness throughout the summer and become part of our regular flu season. **Most individuals will NOT need testing to confirm whether they are sick with this new flu.** Consistent with federal guidelines, LACDPH is recommending testing for flu H1N1 only for persons who are hospitalized or at higher risk for complications from flu-like illness (e.g., pregnant women and those with limited immune function). LACDPH may also conduct testing when it investigates outbreaks. Since most individuals will not receive a confirmed H1N1 diagnosis, our recommendations are based on our standing policies for managing seasonal flu.

**Like our policy for seasonal flu, you do NOT need to call LACDPH, close your camp, cancel activities, or notify your camp community for a single case of new flu A H1N1 ("swine flu").**

It is important to remember that cases and outbreaks of upper respiratory infection are common in school age children and in congregate living situations like camps and dorms. In order to receive our assistance to reduce the spread of infections in camps, camp directors should report to LACDPH outbreaks of **any** illness, including respiratory, gastrointestinal (GI), rash, and bacterial infections. Camps also need to report "influenza-like illness" (ILI) outbreaks:

- **ILI is:** fever >100°F or subjective feeling of fever, AND either new onset of cough, sore throat, or runny nose.
- **An ILI outbreak is:** a cluster of 5 or more new cases in a week of ILI in a single group (i.e., cabin team, etc.). It is important to note that an ILI outbreak may be caused by a variety of bacteria or viruses (not just new flu H1N1).

If a camp identifies a possible ILI outbreak they should:

1. Call LACDPH Morbidity Unit (888-397-3993) as soon as possible. Camps will then be contacted by LACDPH personnel to evaluate the situation and assist with appropriate recommendations. To assist our investigation, you will be asked to report the total number of campers and staff, the number of campers and staff with illness and their symptoms.
2. **For day camps:** Send sick children and staff home as soon as possible; they should remain home until 24 hours after resolution of fever. A mild cough may continue after many illnesses have resolved and should not be the sole cause for sending a person home or refusing readmission.  
**For sleep-over camps:** Place the sick individual(s) in a separate cabin or sleeping area and follow LACDPH guidance for influenza home care. Watch for signs of serious illness (attached). Flu-like illness may persist for several days. Parents or guardians should be consulted on whether they wish to pick up their child or allow the child to get better at the camp.  
**For camp infirmaries:** If your camp provides special infirmary services, please contact LACDPH if you would like further infection control guidance specific to healthcare settings.
3. Enhance and reinforce hand washing and other healthy habits (see below). These recommendations are always important, but especially during a possible illness outbreak.

Many additional materials (flu recommendations and guides, flyers, posters, etc.) are provided in multiple languages on our website and are available in bulk at no cost:

[www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Diseases/Swine.htm](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Diseases/Swine.htm).

**Healthy habits:** We are urging everyone to increase the basic healthy habits we recommend year-round.

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

### **Additional Guidance:**

- **Certain people should take extra precaution against colds and flu.** Some people can become seriously ill if they get the flu, this includes: pregnant women, infants, the elderly, people with HIV or cancer who may have weakened immune systems, and those with heart or lung disease. It is very important that these people take extra care to avoid close contact with other people who are sick, and contact their healthcare provider immediately if they do become sick.
- **Do your best to avoid spreading germs.** Wash your hands frequently, cover your coughs and sneezes, and do not share items (like drinks and eating utensils)—and if you become sick, stay home or stay separate from others until at least 24 hours after resolution of fever.
- **Watch carefully for signs of illness among those at your camp.** The signs of this new flu are like regular flu: fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, and headaches. Sometimes people will also experience vomiting and diarrhea. People who become ill should avoid contact with others until 24 hours after resolution of fever.

- Seeing a doctor is NOT needed for mild illness. Like regular flu, most people with this new flu have had mild illness and do not need to see a doctor. If someone at your camp becomes ill and their symptoms become worse (trouble breathing, very high fever), contact a healthcare provider. Keep a close watch on campers with a history of lung disease (asthma), heart disease, or problems with their immune system (such as cancer or chronic steroid use). If someone with these special circumstances becomes ill with ILI, refer them to a healthcare provider.
- Do NOT encourage the use of antibiotics or antivirals except on advice of a licensed medical doctor. Medications should be taken only under the guidance of a medical doctor since medicines can have side effects, especially if they are not taken correctly. Again, most people with flu or colds get better without seeing a doctor or taking prescription medicine.

Thank you for your attention to these guidelines and your commitment to ensuring the health and safety of your campers and staff this summer. We look forward to continuing to partner with you and will be in close contact to inform you of any updated guidance on this or any other public health issue affecting the Los Angeles County camp community.

Sincerely,



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Director and Health Officer

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