

Flu cases draw school officials' attention, letters sent to parents

Probable cases of swine flu reported in the Clover Park and Puyallup districts, but none here

BY DANNIE OLIVEAUX
The Courier Herald

A recent reports of three probable cases of swine flu in Pierce County caught the attention of Sumner School District officials Friday.

According to Communication Director Ann Cook, the district sent letters to parents concerning swine flu.

"We just want to make sure people are aware and give them methods to protect their family," Cook said. "The district will continue to monitor the disease."

Cook said the letter provide families information about the flu outbreak and ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness.

Last week, the Clover Park School District reported several students at Lakes High School developed flu-like symptoms, according to the school district's Web site.

Clover Park Superintendent Debbie LeBeau closed Lakes as a precautionary measure, canceling all school programs and sports activities.

It was the sixth school in the Puget Sound area to close as a precaution.

The only verified incidence of possible virus or human swine flu involves Lakes students and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department recommended the closure of Lakes High.

Lakes reopened Monday after test results found the students did not have the flu virus.

On Friday, the Puyallup School District reported a student at Edgemont Junior High School developed a probable case of swine flue. District officials decided to keep the school open.

According to the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, the Influenza A causes illness in humans and many animals. Some flu viruses are adapted to pigs and cause respiratory illness in them, and so have been called "swine flu," but this flu is not transmitted from pigs to humans. It is transmitted person-to-person.

The Centers For Disease Control and Prevention has determined that the swine flu virus causing mild illness in some states is the same strain as the virus causing an outbreak of respiratory illness among humans in some areas of Mexico.

More than 140 cases have been reported in the U.S., according to media reports.

As of Monday, the state Department of Health reported 35 probable cases of swine flu - including one in Pierce County.

More information is available from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department at www.tpchd.org, or call the Public Health Emergency Information Line at 253-798-6500.

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