



News from the Office of  
**ERIE COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARK POLONCARZ**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **BURSTEIN NOTES INCREASE IN U.S. SWINE FLU CASES, URGES PRECAUTIONS**

#### *Infections Identified in Three States; Prior Contact with Swine Reported*

**ERIE COUNTY, NY**— Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein today noted a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) Health Advisory reporting that multiple infections with variant\* influenza A (H3N2v) viruses have been identified in 3 states in recent weeks. From July 12 through August 3, 2012, 16 cases of H3N2v were reported and confirmed by CDC. Each of the 16 cases identified since July 12 reported contact with swine prior to illness onset; in 15 cases, contact occurred while attending or exhibiting swine at an agricultural fair.

“People who are at high risk for influenza complications should consider avoiding exposure to pigs and swine barns this summer,” **said Burstein**. “This can include people with underlying chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or who are pregnant. Also, people older than 65 or who have weakened immune systems should be aware, and should practice precautions such as frequent hand washing with soap and running water.”

Since July 12, 2011, there have been 29 cases of H3N2v viruses that contain a gene that may confer increased transmissibility to and among humans. While the viruses identified in these cases are genetically nearly identical, separate swine exposure events in each state were associated with human infection.

Clinical characteristics of the 16 H3N2v recent cases have been generally consistent with signs and symptoms of seasonal influenza, and have included fever, cough, pharyngitis (sore throat), myalgia (muscle pain or tenderness), and headache. No hospitalizations or deaths have occurred among the 16 confirmed cases since July 2012.

“Now that the Erie County Fair is here, it’s important for people to remember to take precautions when they are around livestock, including washing hands before and after being around animals,” **Burstein added**. “Additionally, avoid eating or drinking in animal areas, and avoid close contact with animals that look or act ill. People who experience influenza-like symptoms following direct or close contact with pigs and who seek medical care should inform their health care provider about the exposure.”

\*Influenza viruses that circulate in swine are called swine influenza viruses when isolated from swine, but are called variant viruses when isolated from humans.

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