

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 26, 2009 4:00 PM

PHICC Release No. 09-041

***DPHSS Announces Priority Plans and Response Efforts for H1N1***

DPHSS officials today announce that H1N1 planning and response efforts from now on will be focused on community mitigation (reducing the impact of the illness and preventing complications and death from this newly identified virus), education awareness , continued vigilance and vaccine campaigns for the novel H1N1 influenza and seasonal influenza.

In accordance with the CDC guidelines, Public Health will no longer be reporting individual case numbers to the public, as the H1N1 virus is considered wide spread in the community. Because only a small proportion of persons with respiratory illness are tested for novel H1N1 at this time, confirmed cases represent significant underestimate of the true numbers of novel H1N1 influenza cases. True benefit of reporting these numbers to track this epidemic is questionable. Specimen sampling will continue for the hospitalized patients and those with high risk conditions that can lead to complications from the H1N1 Influenza.

Island residents are advised that planning and response efforts continue and that the planned distribution of vaccines is expected to begin in late October. DPHSS will continue to keep the community informed of planned events and information on updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Island residents are also advised to continue precautionary measures, practice hand hygiene and proper cough and sneeze etiquette to reduce the chances of getting the H1N1 infection.

For more information, please visit the following website at [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov); the Department of Public Health and Social Services website at [www.dphss.guam.gov](http://www.dphss.guam.gov); or Guam Homeland Security/Office of Civil Defense website at [www.guamhs.org](http://www.guamhs.org). You may also call the Information Line at 735-H1N1 (4161).