

***A Message from Alta California Regional Center's
Medical Services Team***

Alta California Regional Center is concerned about the recent outbreak of swine flu in our region and in other parts of the globe. Families, vendors, and other people providing care for consumers need to be aware of the potential consequences if this contagious infection were to further spread in our region of the State. The outbreak of swine flu from Mexico has suggested that a wider outbreak of this virus is a real possibility. There are multiple cases of swine flu in Southern California and some confirmed cases in Sacramento and Marin Counties. The current occurrence of swine flu is treatable with support and medications that lessens the symptoms and shortens their course.

The consequences of the swine flu spreading, while not at all a certainty, could present a very serious problem. Consumers living in a group setting or attending a day program may be more vulnerable to exposure to the swine flu virus because they come into contact with many others. If you provide care to a consumer please remember to follow these simple preventative measures:

1. Use universal precautions by washing your hands frequently, using a hand sanitizer, covering your coughs and sneezes with your upper arm or a disposable tissue, and taking other extra hygiene steps. Wash your hands frequently throughout the day.

2. If you are sick (coughing, fever, lethargy, diarrhea, or other flu like symptoms), please stay at home and make an appointment to see your doctor.

3. Take extra care in visiting people who are sick. If you do visit someone who is sick, use universal precautions.

Family members and vendors are urged to identify those consumers they support who may be more at risk in this situation. Special care should be taken with those individuals at risk to make sure that the best hygiene practices are followed. Consumers that show signs of fever, cough, and other flu-like symptoms should be closely monitored and referred to a physician. Those consumers in a group setting who are ill should be isolated to prevent possible spread of the flu. Please inform an ACRC service coordinator if a consumer you support appears to be affected by the flu.

If there is a need to take a consumer to an emergency room, for any reason, please place an appropriate mask on the consumer and wear a mask yourself. Emergency rooms are places where illnesses like swine flu can be spread.

Further updates may be available on our website at www.altaregional.org . Please contact your service coordinator if you have specific concerns or questions, and please keep up to date by following public announcements in the media and those issued by our State and Federal Departments of Health.