



Town of Falmouth

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Falmouth Emergency Management Team Addresses H1N1 Virus

Falmouth, Maine – May 5, 2009 – Falmouth EMA today announced that the Town of Falmouth has facilitated a plan to ensure that an Emergency Management team is in place to manage issues related to the ongoing H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu) Pandemic event. Work has been done to ensure that proper communication and response resources are ready should they be required.

Fire Chief/EMA Director Howard Rice Jr. explains, *"The town has taken steps to ensure communication links to provide for all citizens. Information can be found on the Town's website at www.town.falmouth.me.us and significant updates will be available as a prerecorded message on the Town's EMA information line at 699-5241."* The website and EMA information line also lists the toll free Maine CDC information line (888) 257-0990.

The EMA team is staffed by representatives from municipal departments including the Wastewater, Parks and Public Works, Police, Fire & EMS, Finance, the Health Officer, as well as school staff.

Public safety personnel have created strategies to implement the CDC directive to reduce the spread of any potential virus. All EMS providers have been fitted with masks should they respond to the scene of a potentially infected patient. The school system has been a significant participant in the town wide efforts. The school nurses have been briefed and are integrated with the EMA team to ensure a timely, coordinated response should the need arise.

"The level of cooperation among all town departments from Public Safety to the School Department is a great example of the systems we have in place for dealing with major incidents throughout the town," according to Town Manager Nathan Poore. *"From our first meeting last week we were focused on providing information to the public and making sure that the town had a single voice through the EMA department."*

Superintendent of Schools Dr. George Entwistle was pleased at how well the school community responded to the communications and requests as part of the overall preparedness efforts: *"The pre-planning that has been done by the schools and the town guarantees a coordinated response and should give community members confidence that their very best interests are being well served."*

The Maine CDC has been very active with communication and resources for the communities throughout Maine. *"As we see more individuals with H1N1, the actual number of probable cases will become less important,"* said Dr. Dora Anne Mills, the Director of the Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *"We know the H1N1 influenza is in Maine and our priority is to slow its transmission and to treat those who may become seriously ill with it."*

Dr. Mills re-iterated the need for people to stay informed, be prepared, and most importantly practice proper respiratory hygiene, including the following steps:

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to avoid infecting them.

End of release. ####