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## **LSU Is Well Prepared for Flu Outbreak**

**Baton Rouge (May 4, 2009)** -- The LSU Health System Health Care Services Division (HCSD) has been actively planning for at least two years within its system of seven hospitals and clinics and with its state and federal partners for a pandemic flu outbreak and has maintained stockpiles of necessary medical supplies.

Additionally, LSU is currently engaging in the following activities:

- Implemented surveillance strategies in all HCSD hospitals and clinics for immediate isolation and testing of patients with influenza-like illness.
- Working with its existing patient help line, 1.877.LSU.TALK (1.877.578.8255), to give the public appropriate health information related to swine flu (H1N1 virus) and to ensure adequate staffing for increased call volume.
- Disseminating swine flu informational fact sheets within all facilities.
- Updated its website with swine flu link to helpful information: [www.lsuhealthcare.org](http://www.lsuhealthcare.org).
- Emphasizing infection control practices among all health care employees.
- Holding system-wide meetings multiple times per week as needed to share information and ensure consistency with regard to response and readiness.
- Participating in state Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health and Centers for Disease Control managed conference calls for the latest information.
- Reviewing pandemic flu protocols and pandemic emergency plan for readiness.

The hope is this flu virus does not spread, but LSU has processes in place to support its communities should the outbreak become worse. Louisiana residents are an important part of the LSU Health System's preparedness efforts.

"We take the threat of swine flu seriously, but we know we can greatly reduce the incidence of infection by practicing good health habits we should always employ," said Dr. Michael Butler, HCSD CEO.

These practices include the following common-sense precautions from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Wash your hands often.
- Cover your mouth when sneezing or coughing.

- If you are sick, stay home from work or school.
- If you develop flu-like symptoms seek the care of a health care professional.
- Patients who suspect they might have a case of swine flu should first call their physicians' office.
- **It is strongly urged that patients do not go to hospital emergency rooms unless they are experiencing severe signs of illness. This will help prevent the spread of the virus.**

The LSU Health System - Health Care Services Division is one of the largest public health care delivery systems in the country. It has over 35,000 inpatient admissions, nearly 196,000 inpatient days, 515,500 outpatient clinic visits, 894,000 outpatient encounters, and nearly 244,000 emergency department visits. Each year nearly 500 residents and fellows from the LSU and Tulane Schools of Medicine and Ochsner Health System and 2,200 nurses and allied health students from many colleges and universities are trained in LSU facilities.

LSU is the largest single provider of uncompensated inpatient care in Louisiana. LSU HCSD hospitals have an economic impact of over \$1.4 billion in asset business activity, \$568 million in personal earnings, and generate over 12,000 jobs.

For more information, contact Marvin McGraw, Director of Communications and Media Relations, LSU Health Care Services Division, 225.279.4744 or [mmcgra@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:mmcgra@lsuhsc.edu) or Michael Higgins, 225.922.0798 or [mhiggi@lsuhsc.edu](mailto:mhiggi@lsuhsc.edu).