

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Borough to Open Swine Flu Information Center

Fairbanks - - Beginning 7 a.m. on Wednesday, September 16, 2009, the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) will open their H1N1 (Swine) Flu Information Center at the Borough Administrative Offices. The number to call to reach the Center is: 459-7474. The center will be staffed from 7 am to 11 am, Monday through Friday.

According to FNSB Emergency Operations Director David Gibbs, a key element of the Information Center is the philosophy that "the buck stops here." Rather than sending concerned residents on a never-ending circle of phone calls to busy agencies and health care providers, the staff will make every effort to track down valid answers, calling them back if necessary. Gibbs says that Information Center staff are not trained medical professionals and cannot be expected to provide medical advice. He stresses that if you have a medical emergency you should still call your regular medical provider, go to the Emergency Room, or dial 9-1-1.

Borough officials realize that area residents are justifiably concerned about the prevalence of the swine flu virus in the Fairbanks area and that they may be having a difficult time getting accurate and timely information about the virus. By providing the Swine Flu Information Center, they hope to help people to be aware and be prepared, rather than being afraid.

Staff in the Information Center will be able to refer callers to reliable agency websites containing valuable information about both preventing becoming sick with the virus as well as how to safely and efficiently deal at home with family members who become ill with the flu. Dealing with flu patients at home reduces the pressure on busy health care facilities and reduces the chance of spreading the virus.

The Borough has established a Pandemic Flu Information Web page. Residents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with how to prepare for a flu pandemic. State health officials are encouraging good hand hygiene, proper cough etiquette and to stay home if you become sick.

Updated information will be provided at www.co.fairbanks.ak.us as it becomes available.

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