

## Hospital Readiness for H1N1, updated as of 10-15-09

Central Montana Medical Center (CMMC) is closely monitoring the progression of H1N1 influenza in our community and preparing for the possibility that they will be providing care for more people infected with this strain of flu. “Our team members are following the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines, as well as our own infection control procedures to help protect our patients, employees and hospital visitors,” said Ann Tuss, Community Relations Coordinator at CMMC. “We ask that no children under the age of 18 and nobody with signs or symptoms of flu-like illness visit the hospital and skilled nursing center.”

Like other hospitals around the state, CMMC has taken steps to prepare for the possibility that there will be more cases of H1N1 influenza in our community and that people may need hospital level care. These preparations include processes for identifying, isolating and caring for patients with the flu, securing supplies and anti-viral medications, and staffing considerations.

Most importantly, CMMC and the County Health District are working together to educate the community about ways to prevent the spread of H1N1 influenza and other viruses. “The most important thing is prevention and getting vaccinated,” said Denise Jimmerson, RN,

Infection Control Preventionist. “Be vigilant about washing your hands, frequently with soap and water or using hand sanitizer. Importantly, too, if you get sick with influenza, stay home from work or school for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.” Other measures to help prevent spread of the illness are cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue in the trash; avoid close contact with sick people and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as germs spread this way. Get your seasonal flu shot as soon as possible and the H1N1 vaccination when it becomes available. Vaccination Clinics are provided by the County Health District and the clinic schedules are posted in the News Argus.