Memorandum

To: Iowa Businesses
From: Iowa Department of Public Health
Date: May 5, 2009
Re: Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Talking Points for Businesses

In an effort to keep our partners informed and up-to-date regarding novel influenza (H1N1), the Iowa Dept. of Public Health has provided the following information for business owners:

• Because both seasonal and novel influenza A (H1N1) viruses are currently circulating in Iowa, it’s important that employees follow basic health guidelines to prevent the spread of illness:
  o Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow, not your hand. Throw used tissues in a trash can.
  o Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand gel if soap and water are not available.
  o If you are ill, stay away from other people by staying home. Do not go to work, school, or travel while ill.
  o Regularly clean common surfaces such as doorknobs with a disinfecting cleaner.

• To date the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have found limited spread of novel influenza A (H1N1) in the workplace. Thus, other than the above recommendations, workplaces would not typically need to take any other special action even if an employee comes down with this novel flu strain.

• If someone who works near you is coughing, sneezing, and does not appear well, suggest they go home. Try to keep three to six feet away from someone who appears ill.

• Iowa Code prevents IDPH from releasing personal information about novel influenza A (H1N1) cases. However, since this virus is circulating in the state, and in adult Iowans, it is reasonable to expect that some employees may become ill. It’s important for employers and employees to follow the above health guidelines.

• More information is available at www.idph.state.ia.us/h1n1/.

• A public hotline to answer questions about novel influenza A (H1N1) is available at 1-866-282-5815.