Public attention focused on swine flu continues to increase, as the Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention (CDC) today reports 91 confirmed cases across ten states. The
first U.S. swine flu fatality – a toddler from Mexico who had traveled with his family to
Texas – was also reported. A total of 25 countries are investigating suspected cases of
swine flu.

In general, the number of seasonal influenza-associated deaths varies from year to year
because flu seasons often fluctuate in length and severity. The CDC estimates that about
36,000 people die of flu-related causes each year.

How MGH staff members have responded to the swine flu outbreak:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the CDC officials today confirmed that
two school-age students from Lowell have tested positive for swine flu. These two
patients, who are brothers, were treated at the MGH Emergency Department (ED)
Saturday, April 25 and Sunday, April 26.

Because they were rapidly identified on entry to the ED as having respiratory symptoms
and fever, masks were placed on the patients when they entered the ED. They were then
found to meet the CDC case definition of suspected swine flu based on a history of travel
to Mexico within seven days, and appropriate testing was done to confirm the cases.
Because they were recognized as suspect swine flu cases but had mild illness, they were
treated and discharged. On careful review by the Infection Control Unit and ED staff, no
exposures of staff or other patients in the ED were found. MGH staff will continue to be
vigilant in identifying and isolating patients who meet CDC case definitions for swine flu
to minimize any possible risks to our staff and patients.

Central Ambulatory Screening and Treatment (CAST) plan for MGH patients

To effectively and quickly respond to the swine flu outbreak, the MGH has activated its
Central Ambulatory Screening and Treatment (CAST) plan. The system is designed to
provide high volume screening of ambulatory patients in a centralized location.

The MGH CAST Screening Unit, located on Wang 1 in the former Walcott Rooms, will
open tomorrow Thursday, April 30. The hours of operation for this week are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, April 30</td>
<td>9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, May 1</td>
<td>8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, May 2</td>
<td>9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, May 3</td>
<td>9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.</td>
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During these times, the MGH CAST Screening Unit will accept ambulatory MGH
patients redirected from the MGH ED, the MGH Medical Walk-In Unit and other MGH
patients who have been clinically assessed by their providers, have fever and respiratory
illness, and meet the CDC suspected case definition for swine flu. The definition can be
Patients sent to the MGH CAST Screening Unit will be instructed to cover their mouth when en-route to the hospital and will be instructed to enter the hospital via the Main Lobby, where masks will be available at the information desks. Masks also will be available at the Wang entrance. Patients should be advised to place a mask over their mouth immediately upon arrival and then follow the signs to the MGH CAST Screening Unit. Referred suspect patients will be screened and tested in the CAST Screening Unit.

For MGH practices that have negative pressure rooms (Airborne Infection Isolation Rooms), patients who meet the swine flu suspect case definition can be screened and tested in the practice with samples collected in the negative pressure room by a clinician who is wearing a fit-tested N95 respirator, gown, gloves and eye protection. Such patients need not be referred to the CAST Screening Unit for a second evaluation, and samples can be sent to the MGH Virology Lab. Instructions on how to obtain samples and the necessary forms are available on the MGH Infection Control website at [http://infectioncontrol.massgeneral.org/icu/](http://infectioncontrol.massgeneral.org/icu/) under Swine Flu Information then Guidance for Laboratory Procedures. Please report cases who meet the swine flu suspect case definition to the Infection Control Unit at (617) 726-2036. After obtaining specimens from patients who meet the definition of suspect cases, call Infectious Diseases at (617) 726-3812 to get approval for filling a prescription for oseltamavir at the MGH outpatient pharmacy.

All clinical questions related to swine flu should be directed to the MGH Infectious Disease Division at (617) 726-3812.

Questions related to Isolation Precautions should be directed to the Infection Control Unit at (617) 726-2036.

_David C. Hooper, MD_  
_Chief, Chief, Infection Control Unit Chief_

_Stephen B. Calderwood, MD_  
_Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases_

_Paul Biddinger, MD_  
_Director of Operations and Disaster Medicine_