Gov. Perry Addresses Efforts to Combat Swine Flu in Texas

*State’s pandemic flu plan in effect*

*Note - Gov. Perry frequently departs from prepared remarks.*

**Wednesday, April 29, 2009**

Good morning and thank you for joining us today. As you are well aware, the increase of swine flu cases around the world is causing serious concerns for healthcare professionals.

As of this morning, we have sixteen confirmed cases here in Texas, including one fatality. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victim's family as they deal with their loss. Here in a minute, Dr. Lakey will share more information on that case, along with the details of our state’s aggressive approach to this public health challenge.

Texans can be confident that we are making every effort to stay ahead of the curve, to keep them and their families as safe as possible.

It is helpful to start with a bit of perspective: Texans are no stranger to the flu. We get our flu shots in the fall and deal with the symptoms when they hit, typically in the winter months.

Right now, the typical Texas flu season is winding down, but we are watching a new strain manifest itself, a new variant that could cause serious trouble if left unchecked.

Fortunately, we have a detailed plan in place to deal with this very situation, an approach based on extensive research, careful planning and collaboration with our partners at every level.

We have not only rehearsed this plan repeatedly, we have honed our team approach to disaster management, during our response to storms, wildfires and other challenges.

Led by Dr. Lakey, Jack Colley and the folks in our Division of Emergency Management, we

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have been executing our pandemic flu plan since we got word of the initial cases in Schertz.

As part of that plan, I am issuing a disaster proclamation today which covers the entire state. Although the virus has not been detected in every county, this step will move Texas to a higher state of alert, and release resources to address the spread of the virus.

For example, the CDC has responded to my request by releasing 25% of our anti-viral medications from the national strategic stockpile.

These 850,000 doses of anti-viral drugs will augment the 840,000 doses that our Legislature funded in the last session, to ensure we have adequate supplies, and allow us to replenish hospitals and pharmacies if needed.

Our statewide medical team, under the leadership of Dr. David Lakey, is coordinating with our Office of Homeland Security, staying in constant contact with local public healthcare organizations, and interacting with our federal partners as we execute our plan to keep our Texans safe.

Our citizens need to know two things: one, there is no need to panic. The incidents of swine flu have been limited in number with symptoms that are generally mild.

Number two, you can be confident in our state’s level of preparedness.

I urge our citizens to act responsibly in the course of this situation, by heeding advice from local and state health officials, and taking the necessary steps to stay healthy.

As Texans always do when facing a challenge, we prepare for the worst and pray for the best. Working together, we will get through this challenge as well.