

U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP)

The Swine Flu Epidemic: The Public Health and Medical Response
Wednesday, April 29, 3:00 p.m.

Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), Chairman / Senator Michael Enzi (R-WY), Ranking Member

Panel I

Richard E. Besser, M.D., *Acting Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Atlanta, GA*

Anthony Fauci, M.D., *Director, National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Bethesda, MD*

Minutes:

Illness now to be officially called: 2009 H1N1 Influenza (Dr. Falci)

- Dr. Besser from CDC stated that the raising of the Phase from 4 to 5 does not matter – it is what we do that matters
- Economic issues: budget cuts have cut needed staff for the response
- Institute of Medicine (IOM) – we have little to no additional capacity in our medical facilities to meet potential needs
- Antivirals: some states have purchased their own supplies –others will be solely counting on the government for supply
- Statements that the media is alarming people
- Border screening: not of any value after multiple state cases have occurred
- Seasonal flu and the deaths that result should get the same attention as this is getting (Dr. Besser)
- Stockpile drugs and testing kits are being sent out- starts with states with cases- will be sent to all states within 1 week
- Why are our cases mild: 1) maybe early diagnosis and treatment, 2) maybe it is early in the course of the disease, 3) there may be environmental factors

[Watch a video of the hearing](#) provided by the Senate HELP Committee.

Minutes by Katherine West, BSN, MSED, CIC, Infection Control Consultant, Manassas, Virginia. IAFC EMS Section Emerging Disease Committee (EDC) member.