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Six Swine Flu Cases Suspected in Maryland

Maryland officials have identified six probable cases of swine flu in the state, Governor **Martin O'Malley** said Wednesday, marking the first possible cases of the rapidly spreading disease in the Washington region. The Maryland patients, three in Anne Arundel County and three in Baltimore County, have been hospitalized and all are recovering from their illnesses. All have recently visited Mexico or have come in contact with another person who has. The disease is believed to have originated in Mexico and is confirmed or suspected in at least 159 deaths there.

A record number of patients have flooded some Washington-area hospitals fearing they have contracted the swine flu, but there have been no confirmed cases in the area as of Tuesday afternoon. Many patients who were concerned they might have the swine flu complained of allergy symptoms.

Officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said there were at least 109 confirmed cases of swine flu in 10 US states, with the majority of the cases in New York. The World Health Organization (WHO) say the flu has spread to at least nine countries. No US residents have died from the flu, although a Mexican toddler who had traveled with his family to Texas became the first fatality in the US.

Johns Hopkins Acquires Montgomery County's Suburban Hospital

Last Friday, the Johns Hopkins Health System Corporation announced that it will acquire Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, providing the hospital's patients and medical personnel with easier access to Hopkins personnel and facilities. In return, the \$4.5 billion Johns Hopkins system will have a greater presence in the Washington region and a closer physical proximity to the millions of dollars of research conducted at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). In recent years, Suburban has broadened its relationship with the NIH and expanded its cardiac surgery and stroke programs and trauma center.

Although details of the financial arrangements have not been released, the deal is expected to be final by early fall. Johns Hopkins will acquire Suburban's assets and liabilities, although there would be no financial exchange. Johns Hopkins will also reexamine a \$135 million proposal, under review by a Montgomery hearing examiner, to expand Suburban's Bethesda campus.

Providence Hospital Representative Honored at AHA Annual Membership Meeting

Providence Hospital's Vice President of Planning, Marketing and Government Relations, **Michael Thompson**, was honored Tuesday at the American Hospital Association's (AHA) 2009 Grassroots Champions Award for his outstanding accomplishments in grassroots advocacy.

The AHA *Grassroots Champion Award* recognizes one hospital leader from each state who educates officials on how major issues impact the hospital's vital role in the community, who has done exemplary work in broadening the base of community support for hospitals and who is an advocate for both the hospital and its patients. DCHA was pleased to nominate Mr. Thompson because of his work in ensuring accurate data for the District's State Health Plan and his efforts in developing a protocol for the proper discharge of patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities from hospitals into group homes.

House and Senate Approve Budget with Health Care Reform Instructions

The US House of Representatives and US Senate approved a \$3.6 trillion federal fiscal year 2010 budget on Wednesday with a provision, known as reconciliation, that would allow a health care bill to pass in the Senate by a simple majority rather than the 60-vote supermajority usually required to end debate in the chamber. Republicans criticized the bill for its high cost and the presence of the reconciliation instructions, which would eliminate the Republican's ability to block a health care bill through the use of the filibuster. Senate Democratic leaders said they plan to use reconciliation as a last resort, if they are unable to reach some kind of agreement between the two parties by mid-October.

Senate Confirms Kathleen Sebelius as HHS Secretary

The US Senate voted 65-31 Tuesday night to confirm Kansas Governor **Kathleen Sebelius** as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The confirmation vote came after Democrats urged quick action so that Mrs. Sebelius could get to work leading the federal response to the swine flu outbreak. Immediately after the vote, Mrs. Sebelius resigned as governor in Kansas and headed to Washington to get sworn in. Republican opponents cited Mrs. Sebelius' pro-choice stances and raised concerns about whether President **Barack Obama's** Administration plans to reform the nation's health care system would cut Republicans out of the legislative process or lead to a rationing of care.

National Capital Poison Center Offers Chemical Terrorism Program

The National Capital Poison Center is offering a program entitled *Chemical Terrorism for the Clinician: Detection, Diagnosis and Treatment*. The program is designed to list clinical presentation of chemical terrorism agent exposures to enable early identification of cases and discuss treatment modalities for victims of chemical terrorism. The program will also describe the role of the Poison Center in surveillance for, and diagnosis and treatment of, individuals exposed to chemical terrorism agents. The program will be offered nine times in 2009. For dates and further information, please contact Melinda Marsolek at marsolek@poison.org or 202-362-4263.

DCHA 2009 Spring Luncheon – Register On-line by May 14th Deadline!

Registration is [available on-line](#) for this year's Spring Luncheon. The luncheon will be held on **Friday, May 22, 2009 from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM at the Four Seasons Hotel, Corcoran Ballroom, 2800 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC.** Back by popular demand, entertainment from Dave Werner.



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