

April 28, 2009

Global

Swine flu virus triggers concern: what you need to know for travel

A unique strain of the swine flu virus has been widely reported and confirmed in various countries including Mexico, the United States, and Canada. At this time, the World Health Organization (WHO), which is part of the United Nations, has not recommended any restrictions for travel or trade. However, WHO officials have asked countries around the world to increase both their monitoring and reporting. CWT advises clients reference local official sources for current information when considering any travel program adjustments.

Defining swine flu

According to the WHO, "Swine influenza, or swine flu, is a highly contagious acute respiratory disease of pigs, caused by one of several swine influenza A viruses. Persons infected with this new strain of the virus typically have a fever, cough and sore throat; some also have had vomiting and diarrhea. At this time, the virus is believed to be transmitted through coughing or sneezing, not from consumption or contact with pork or pork products. Persons infected are believed to be contagious for up to seven days from onset, longer if symptoms continue."

Swine flu and corporate travel

CWT deploys a Core Crisis Management Team to handle repercussions from major events impacting travel. This team consists of members from operations, industry relations, client services, finance, facilities, government, communications, human resources, information technology, and executive leadership. The team meets immediately during and/or after an event has occurred and regularly thereafter to confirm the status of employees, travelers, clients, and suppliers. Following is some insight on how CWT has prepared for the potential effect swine flu could have on corporate travel, along with information on what organizations can do to prepare themselves.

Travel manager preparation

Travel managers can provide leadership in their organization on this issue and can take

several precautionary measures to prepare for the effect this virus could have on their company's travelers.

In addition to this *CWT Industry Viewpoint*, travel managers should watch for and review ongoing updates from CWT and other sources to monitor the situation and identify and evaluate potential threats to travelers. In addition, travelers should be educated on current corporate policies and emergency procedures as well as brief travelers going to risk-associated destinations before they leave.

- Use current communication channels for employee and travel-related information, including intranet sites, email and self-booking tool options.
- Work closely within your established risk management teams and familiarize yourself with your company's crisis response process to act in accordance should it become necessary.
- Use CWT's reporting capabilities, via the *CWT Program Management Center*, to determine which travelers have recently been to Mexico, or intend to travel there soon.

Traveler preparation

This situation is still in the early stages. To ensure an informed decision about any pending travel, travelers are encouraged to use local official sources for current travel advice in addition to any directives provided by CWT and their organization.

For travelers who consider their business to be essential, CWT emphasizes that they should review any emergency-related information contained in their company's corporate travel policy and related to their specific destination to ensure their preparation and comfort-level with travel. Other general recommendations for travelers: Wash hands often, cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze; avoid close contact with sick people. If you are sick, limit contact with others and get help immediately, as early detection and

treatment are key to recovering and to minimizing an outbreak.

Organizational preparation

Internally, CWT is examining the best way to educate employees and provide preventative tips for staying healthy at home, in the office and while traveling. CWT is also taking measures to ensure business continuity for clients should the swine flu virus further spread. Furthermore, CWT has an established contingency plan to quickly determine how to best distribute workload to meet the demands of the situation.

Stay informed

This situation will continue to evolve quickly. CWT urges travel managers and travelers to stay informed by consulting recognized, credible sources for the most up-to-date information. The CWT Crisis Management Team consulted several of the following external sources for portions of this update. The related links may also be useful for current information ongoing:

CWT Alerts

Monitor CWT Alerts as delivered 24/7 by CWT Corporate Communications.

CWT Portal

To search alerts and destination intelligence from the *CWT Portal*:

1. Click on "Learn More" from the "News and Alerts" section on the home page of the CWT Portal to access all story categories and event analysis. Also, you can click on "Health" for more specific, health related stories.
2. Click on the "Destination Intelligence" tab at the top of the CWT Portal for a wealth of information on Mexico and for additional news stories. To drill down, click on the map in the "Destination Intelligence" tab.

For those travel managers who do not have the *CWT Portal*:

- Liaise with your program managers to access the intelligence in the *CWT Portal*.

Travel Managers can also access all news classified as having "significant traveler impact" from the CWT Program Management Center (PMC) "Alerts" box on the left side of the page.

World Health Organization

www.who.int

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>

United States Centers for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/content/SwineFluMexico.aspx>

Associated Press

www.associatedpress.com