States, D.C. said not ready for pandemic

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Washington, D.C., and more than two dozen states are not adequately prepared if the outbreak of swine flu becomes a full-blown crisis, federal records indicate.

The federal effort to combat a possible pandemic includes emergency supplies of ant-iviral medications, a stockpiling system now being tested as cases of the H1N1 strain of the influenza virus continue to spread.

The Washington Post says 27 states and the nation's capital are 10 million dosages short of the levels that the federal government believes they should have for a pandemic. The drugs, in this case, Tamiflu and Relenza, would be used to treat the illness, not to prevent it.

Federal agencies, which under the plan are expected to create their own stockpiles, are also reported to be falling short. The U.S. Postal Service, which would be expected to deliver medications in a pandemic, has no anti-viral medicafion stocked, the Post said.

Overall, the federal government says it has met its goal of accumulating 50 million courses of the medications, and the rollout of drugs to the states has gone smoothly.

Along with the federal doses, the plan called for the states together to create a cache of 30 million doses, but they are said to have fallen short of that figure by one-third. Maine, for example, has three confirmed cases of swine flu, but has stockpiled no medications.

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