Mexico reports 40 more swine flu cases

by UPI

MEXICO CITY -- Forty more people have tested positive for the H1N1 swine flu virus in Mexico, bringing confirmed cases to 300 with 12 deaths, authorities say.

Schools, businesses and non-essential government offices will be closed for five days in an effort to contain the outbreak. President Felipe Calderon urged people to stay home during the Cinco de Mayo holiday, the Voice of America reported.

Meanwhile, the United States announced plans to purchase an additional 13 million courses of flu medicine to add to the treatment stockpile.

U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said Thursday that 400,000 of the additional treatments will be sent to Mexico, the epicenter of the influenza outbreak.

The United States already has more than 70 million courses of anti-viral drugs stockpiled across the country.

The U.S. has confirmed 109 cases, including the only death recorded outside of Mexico, that of a Mexican toddler visiting the the border state of Texas.

Some U.S. cities are closing schools, but the government is keeping border crossings open and is encouraging people to travel inside the country as usual unless they are experiencing flu-like symptoms.

The flu has not reached pandemic proportions, but the World Health Organization is asking all countries to combat the spreading virus with "increased urgency."

European Union ministers held emergency talks on the crisis Thursday in Luxembourg and ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations plan to meet next week.

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