

SECRETARY NAPOLITANO ANNOUNCES H1N1 PREPAREDNESS GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

WASHINGTON-Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano today joined Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Karen Mills and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Influenza Division Deputy Director Daniel Jernigan to announce a preparedness guide to assist small businesses in planning for the H1N1 flu.

"Small businesses play an essential role in our national effort to prepare for all disasters and emergencies-including the H1N1 flu," said Secretary Napolitano. "This guide will help America's small businesses maintain continuity of operations and resiliency as the fall flu season approaches."

"Small Business owners should take the time to create a plan, talk with their employees and make sure they are prepared for flu season," added Administrator Mills. "For countless small businesses, having even one or two employees out for a few days has the potential to negatively impact operations and their bottom line. A thoughtful plan will help keep employees and their families healthy, as well as protect small businesses and local economies."

Outbreaks of H1N1 flu are occurring now across the country and will likely coincide with the return of seasonal flu this fall and winter. The preparedness guide offers small business employers tools and information to help them plan for and respond flexibly to varying levels of severity of an H1N1 outbreak-which may lead to increased absenteeism, and, if the outbreak becomes more severe, may include restricted service capabilities and supply chain disruptions. Additional preparations may be necessary if a more serious outbreak evolves during the fall and winter.

Employers are encouraged to put strategies in place now to protect their employees and their businesses in advance of the fall flu season. Included in the preparedness guide are tips on how to write a continuity of operations plan, steps for keeping employees healthy, frequently asked questions about the 2009 H1N1 flu and a list of additional resources that employers can access online.

<http://www.flu.gov/professional/business/smallbiz.html>

<http://www.flu.gov/professional/business/index.html>