



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

**Important health information for Indigenous communities and health care providers
from Australia's Chief Medical Officer**

While most cases of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 (Human Swine Flu) in Australia have been mild, and people have fully recovered, there have been a number of cases requiring hospitalisation, and some cases resulting in death.

People with underlying chronic health conditions are at greater risk of severe outcomes with this influenza. As Indigenous Australians are known to have higher rates of underlying chronic disease, some of which may be undiagnosed, they have been identified as a potential group with greater risk of severe outcomes.

Health and community service providers working with Indigenous communities thus have an important role in promoting greater understanding of what people can do to minimise the spread of infection in their communities, and in helping those with influenza like illness access medical support.

Australia's influenza pandemic management plan includes an Appendix: '*Guidance for primary health care workers providing care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*'. This Appendix was developed in consultation with the Indigenous health sector and has been endorsed by the Australian Health Protection Committee. It delivers practical advice for primary health care providers who are likely to provide care to Indigenous Australians.

To help you communicate information about Pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza, I have developed a set of influenza questions and answers and fact sheet for use in your community.

For up-to-date clinical information on the influenza and other developments you should regularly visit www.healthemergency.gov.au. You can also download copies of the Appendix, as well as printable PDF files of the fact sheet and questions and answers documents.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Bishop'.

Professor Jim Bishop AO
MD MMed MBBS FRACP FRCPA
14 August 2009

A second handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Bishop'.