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TeamHealth Medical Call Center Announces Protocols and Preparation for Swine Flu Concerns

KNOXVILLE, Tenn., September 25, 2009 -- TeamHealth Medical Call Center (THMCC), a division of TeamHealth, announced today its preparation strategy for increased calls related to concerns about H1N1 influenza or “swine flu.” THMCC receives calls from individuals across the nation and has geared up for the anticipated call volume. The call center’s patient triage protocols specific to influenza concerns have been enhanced, and new symptom-based guidelines have been implemented. Through the enhanced protocols for pandemic influenza, THMCC can dispense accurate and timely information regarding H1N1 flu treatment, home care, and criteria for emergency care.

“Information is the first line of defense in H1N1, and providing a communications resource is not only important for patients and a concerned public, but can also relieve the increased demands placed upon healthcare providers,” stated Alan Taylor, senior vice president of operations for THMCC.

THMCC’s enhanced protocols were developed in accordance with the National Strategic Plan for Emergency Department Management of Outbreaks of Novel H1N1 Influenza for Health Information Call Centers. New symptom guidelines for pediatric and adult patients have been incorporated into the telephone triage process and are being distributed to the healthcare clients of THMCC. A fact sheet is also available to callers upon request.

All clinical calls fielded by THMCC are handled by trained nurses and overseen by the center’s medical directors, Roger Brooksbank, M.D., a Fellow of the American College of Emergency Physicians, and Robert Dickson, M.D., a board-certified pediatrician. THMCC is one of only 34 medical call centers in the nation accredited by the Utilization Review Accreditation Commission, an independent, nonprofit organization that is well known as a leader in promoting healthcare quality through its accreditation and certification programs.

“TeamHealth Medical Call Center has assembled an H1N1 Preparedness Task Force committee that meets on a regular basis to discuss contingency plans for call routing, call handling process efficiencies, and creative PRN staffing if a flu outbreak affects one or more of our clients,” stated Cindy Reed, Executive Director of THMCC. “This committee has developed aggressive action plans for Code Yellow, Orange, and Red status based upon call volume level.”

THMCC is a division of TeamHealth, a leading national healthcare organization headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee. Most of the approximately 300 emergency departments (EDs) served by TeamHealth staffing and management have also been involved in special preparations. Since 2006, TeamHealth has been developing and implementing a pandemic influenza preparedness initiative in collaboration with state and federal agencies and the ED clients it serves across America. The efforts of THMCC dovetail with the preparations made by TeamHealth on behalf of ED clients.

THMCC contracts with 248 physician groups, hospitals, health plans, and other healthcare organizations throughout 27 states and has an established network with local health departments and EDs, as well as access to the latest information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and crucial website links.

More information about swine flu, symptoms of the disease, and confirmed cases in the U.S. is available from the CDC at www.cdc.gov/swineflu.

About TeamHealth

Founded in 1979, TeamHealth is headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee. TeamHealth is affiliated with more than 6,000 healthcare professionals who provide emergency medicine, radiology, hospital medicine, urgent care and pediatric staffing and management services to approximately 550 civilian and military hospitals, and clinics and physician groups in 45 states. More information is available at www.teamhealth.com or 800.818.1498.

THMCC provides 24/7 medical call center services to enhance patient satisfaction of hospitals, physician groups, managed care organizations, and student healthcare organizations on a national level. More information is available at www.thmedicalcallcenter.com or 888.203.1118.