



# Glen Abbot Ltd.

## Swine Flu Briefing 37 – 11/10/2009

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### Current Situation:

Although the number of cases continues to increase in the Northern hemisphere the numbers have not yet reached the level which might be expected. Does this mean that the pandemic might not be as severe as expected? Well that has to be the hope. Of course the cold weather has not yet arrived so that is likely to bring in an increase in cases, but it may be that we will not see the level of illness predicted for this wave.

So can we relax? Well a little! If previous patterns are followed we will see another wave with a mutated version of the virus and that may cause problems, but at the moment it looks good. Although in its latest view of the spread of the current virus, released on Friday, the WHO said there has been an unusually early start of flu-like illness in the northern hemisphere this autumn

The good news about the slow rise in cases is that it will allow the vaccinations to be given in time. There had always been the risk that the virus would spread quickly and be peaking before the vaccination programme would reach all those in key groups.

In England there were 18,000 cases last week (up from 14,000), Scotland reported fall of almost half from the previous week (although that figure was unusual in that the reporting method changed). Only Northern Ireland appears to be having problems.

Here is a quote from Health Minister Michael McGimpsey.

*Incidents of swine flu in Northern Ireland remain high and we must expect further increases in cases in the weeks ahead. Swine flu remains a major public health threat but we are well prepared and have been planning for a pandemic for some time.*

Sir Liam Donaldson commented on the situation in England.

*There is a bit of herd immunity out there because of the earlier peak in July, especially among school children but it's too early to say whether it will continue to be a slow burn. We are still early in the flu season.*



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In the USA the spread is also continuing. Thirty-seven states reported geographically widespread influenza activity, Guam and 11 states reported regional influenza activity, two states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico reported local influenza activity, and the U.S. Virgin Islands did not report.

Although it is not quite at epidemic levels yet, H1N1 is spreading in many states at a time when normally there is little or no influenza, the U.S. Centre for Disease Control and Prevention said.

### **The solution for business people!**

I picked up this story from Reuters. I assume as the date is not the first of April it just might be true!

*For the executive who doesn't have time to come down with the flu, a Japanese company has invented a new form of protection -- the anti-H1N1 suit.*

*Menswear company Haruyama Trading claims the suit can protect wearers from the H1N1 virus, also known as swine flu, as it is coated with titanium dioxide, a chemical commonly used in toothpaste and cosmetics and that breaks down when reacting with light, supposedly killing the virus upon contact.*

*Shinto Hirata, vice director of merchandising at Haruyama, says the suit is proven to kill 40 percent of the latest flu virus in about three hours and will retain its protective capability even after being washed several times.*

Don't all rush at once...

### **Phase Six for how long?**

It could take years for the World Health Organisation to downgrade the H1N1 flu from a pandemic to seasonal-like virus, the agency said on Friday.

WHO spokesman Gregory Hartl said that health warning would stay in place until people can better fend off infection from the H1N1 strain.

*"At some point in the future, there would be a recognition of the fact that if it's no longer circulating on a sustainable basis in communities. Then you would lower the pandemic level," he said, while stressing: "There is absolutely no indication yet of that happening"*

### **Past Briefings**

All previous briefings are available at our website:

[www.glenabbot.co.uk](http://www.glenabbot.co.uk)

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## Training and Consultancy

We provide specific pandemic training courses both publicly and bespoke to companies. If you are interested please contact me directly or email Geoff Howard at Continuity Shop ([ghoward@continuityshop.com](mailto:ghoward@continuityshop.com)).

We can also help organisation review or create plans so if you need any assistance please contact me via this email or Andrew Sinclair on [Andrew.sinclair@glenabbot.co.uk](mailto:Andrew.sinclair@glenabbot.co.uk). Our office number is 01738 580580.

Yours sincerely



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