



AH&LA Member Speaking Points on Swine Flu Influenza *April 30, 2009*

General speaking points from AH&LA regarding swine flu's effect on the industry:

- Swine flu has not been detected at any hotel property in the United States.
- There are currently no U.S. travel restrictions in place, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has declared that swine flu should not discourage the public from traveling.
- To minimize potential for an outbreak of swine flu or any contagious disease, AH&LA is encouraging all hotel employees and guests to follow the CDC's precautionary measures. These recommended actions include the following common sense steps for protecting oneself: "wash your hands...get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food."
- During this fragile economic time, the U.S. hotel industry, along with the general economy, would be hit hard if travelers were to cut back their travels due to this fear which, at this time, has not posed and does not appear to pose any health threat to U.S. hotel guests or employees.
- AH&LA encourages consumers to be aware of current events, and to travel as they normally would. Now is a great time for the public to travel as many hotels are currently offering significant deals and promotions to attract customers.
- Generally speaking, during the week of April 27, 2009, hotel properties have not seen significant cancellations of meetings, events, or guestroom bookings as a direct result of the swine flu outbreak.
- On Monday, April 27, when the outbreak was first noted in Europe and European Union (EU) Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou urged Europeans to postpone nonessential travel to parts of North America affected by swine flu, the European reservation offices of some hotel companies saw the most significant number of cancellations. This number leveled out during the next few hours and days, as Vassiliou clarified that

he “meant a travel advisory, not a travel ban, for travel to Mexico City and those states in the United States where we have outbreaks” of swine flu.

- The EU health commissioner only makes recommendations to the 27 member countries; the countries themselves must make a final decision to set travel advisories through their foreign ministries.
- In general, U.S. hotel companies’ reservation offices have not seen a comparable number of cancellations.
- AH&LA and members of the hotel industry will have a better understanding of the swine flu outbreak’s effects on the total industry next week. There is not expected to be a long-term effect on occupancy levels based on the swine flu outbreak.
- Plans put in place to deal with possible recent disease epidemics such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the Avian flu, are being utilized by hoteliers, lodging companies, and government officials to determine appropriate responses to swine flu.

Talking points for hoteliers to use when addressing queries about influenza in their hotels:

- We have been monitoring the situation closely and are aware that swine flu (has/has not) currently affected people in our area.
- Guest and employee safety is of the utmost concern, and we are following preventative measures to ensure all are protected to the best of our ability.
- To date, there have been no reported cases of swine flu involving any U.S. hotel guest or employee.
- Health authorities have stated that you cannot catch influenza from hotel bedspreads or blankets. It is only transmitted through person-to-person contact.
- We have evaluated our emergency plan, and, should an outbreak occur, will mobilize in accordance with necessary action to ensure safety of all associated with the property.

Additional speaking points (if the property is taking the following AH&LA- and CDC-recommended actions):

- We are in contact with local health authorities and are following their instructions about public areas and how to contain any possibility of infection.
- We are providing more soap and hand-cleanser products for guests and employees.
- We are being proactive in our measures to keep any sort of communicable disease out of our hotels by mandating that employees who are showing any signs of flu take mandatory sick leave.