

Subject:
RE: SWINE FLU PANDEMIC AT MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN
From:
"Witold Skwierczynski" <Witold1@attglobal.net>
Date:
Fri, 19 Jun 2009 15:06:20 -0400
To:
"McGruder, Shawn" <Shawn.McGruder@ssa.gov>, "McMahon Linda S" <linda.s.mcmahon@ssa.gov>, "Astrue, Michael J." <Michael.J.Astrue@ssa.gov>, "Gage John" <gagej@afge.org>, "Doggett Enid" <doggee@afge.org>.[address list edited for brevity].

Why isn't the Agency alerting the public to the fact that employees infected with swine flu were spreading the disease around due to their mere presence in Wisconsin offices? I guess if SSA won't, AFGE will try to alert the public.

I find the Agency's failure to take any action in this situation shameful. If employees become ill or, hazard the thought, die the blame will be on SSA which refuses to release employees, close offices that have been knowingly infected and refuses to inform employees of their contractual rights to excused absence and Agency payment of a medical examination if they have been exposed to a serious communicable disease.

I also find it outrageous that 2 months after you were aware of the swine flu problem, SSA does not have a plan on how to deal with infectious situations. This is obvious since local SSA authority were paralyzed to act and contacted Dr. Goy who contacted the Wisconsin Health department who issued a recommendation that the Agency is following. Obviously the agency has no plan – a sign of a leadership vacuum.

Why hasn't the agency consulted with the Center for Disease Control (CDC)? A simple examination of their website indicates SSA failure to follow the plan for businesses when someone becomes infected with swine flu.

Witold Skwierczynski
President
AFGE Council 220

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From: McGruder, Shawn [mailto:Shawn.McGruder@ssa.gov]
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2009 1:05 PM
To: Witold Skwierczynski
Cc: Marshall, James; Schultz, Loni
Subject: FW: SWINE FLU PANDEMIC AT MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN

Mr. Skwierczynski:

Per our agreement with Mr Marshall, the General Committee Spokesperson, local issues will be addressed at that level. I will tell you that the Region has already requested guidance from the Acting Medical Officer. He has contacted the Wisconsin Department of Health Services about the situation you describe and ascertained that the local health department is not recommending closure of workplaces or schools, nor are they recommending sanitizing the workplace, because this is ineffective. The agency is working to ensure that local management will have complete information necessary to communicate directly with Ms. Schultz concerning this matter.

Kindest regards,
(Ms.) Shawn S. McGruder
Acting Deputy Associate Commissioner for Operations
Office of Labor-Management and Employee Relations
6401 Security Boulevard, Annex-2170
Baltimore, MD 21235
E-mail: shawn.mcgruder@ssa.gov
Phone: (410) 965-0277

FAX: (410) 597-0449

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From: Witold Skwierczynski [mailto:Witold1@attglobal.net]
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2009 10:54 AM
To: Schultz, Loni; loni_schultz@yahoo.com; Pagan, Robert; 'David Sheagley'; McMahan, Linda S.; McDonnell, Roger; Beaver, Milt; marsh-jn@msn.com
Cc: 'dennis wilson'; 'Sheila Hampton'; Bachinski, Greg; Ash, Vicki; Dess, Jay; 'Chris Mulholland'; 'Charlie Estudillo'; howardegerman@ssa.gov; 'Dana Duggins'; 'debbie fredericksen'
Subject: RE: SWINE FLU PANDEMIC AT MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN

Deputy Commissioner McMahan:

I have received no response regarding the emergency swine flu situation in Wisconsin. 3 more employees have been diagnosed as having the disease. No action has been taken to close the affected offices. If more employees become ill, it will be as a result of the agency's failure to take immediate action.

Please respond to this health and safety crisis.

Witold Skwierczynski
AFGE Council 220

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From: Schultz, Loni [mailto:Loni.Schultz@ssa.gov]
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2009 10:43 AM
To: Witold Skwierczynski; loni_schultz@yahoo.com; Pagan, Robert; David Sheagley; McMahan, Linda S.; McDonnell, Roger; Beaver, Milt; marsh-jn@msn.com
Cc: dennis wilson; Sheila Hampton; Bachinski, Greg; Ash, Vicki; Dess, Jay; Chris Mulholland; Charlie Estudillo; howardegerman@ssa.gov; Dana Duggins; debbie fredericksen
Subject: RE: SWINE FLU PANDEMIC AT MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN

Witold,

It is 9:37 A.M. and I am on break. I am on an Agency day. There has been no response from the Area Director's Office so far today. Total silence about the situation, so I assume that they are refusing to close down an office where we have a swine flu epidemic. There are three trainees who have been sick all week and a confirmed diagnosis of swine flu in the office. One of the trainees who is sick has a baby at home. Children's immune systems are not fully developed which creates a higher risk of complications if they develop swine flu. The Agency needs to take action to close this office immediately and offer testing to all the employees.

Loni

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From: Witold Skwierczynski [mailto:witold1@attglobal.net]
Sent: Friday, June 19, 2009 12:26 AM
To: loni_schultz@yahoo.com; Pagan, Robert; 'David Sheagley'; McMahan, Linda S.; McDonnell, Roger; Beaver, Milt; marsh-jn@msn.com
Cc: 'dennis wilson'; 'Sheila Hampton'; Bachinski, Greg; Ash, Vicki; Dess, Jay; 'Chris Mulholland'; 'Charlie Estudillo'; howardegerman@ssa.gov; 'Dana Duggins'; 'debbie fredericksen'; Schultz, Loni
Subject: RE: SWINE FLU PANDEMIC AT MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN

Deputy Commissioner McMahan:

It appears that there is a serious health and safety problem in 3 Wisconsin offices visited by an SSA employee this week who has been diagnosed with swine flu. Exposure to this highly contagious and deadly disease poses a health threat to employees in these 3 offices, the families of exposed employees and the public who visited these offices. SSA should take immediate action to close these offices; offer employees excused absences and inform employees that the Agency will pay for medical examinations for the purpose of determining whether exposure to swine flu has resulted in their contraction of the disease. Also, the Agency should issue a press release to alert the public who visited these offices during the period of exposure that they were exposed to the swine flu virus and that they should take the appropriate medical precautions.

SSA should ask competent public health authorities to inspect these offices to determine the extent of the contamination and to recommend that appropriate measures be undertaken to sanitize these facilities prior to re-occupancy.

This incident highlights the necessity for SSA to devise a comprehensive strategy to insure that all its facilities enact proper precautions to minimize the danger of exposure to swine flu. In addition, the Agency needs to take immediate action to devise a plan of action when SSA facilities are exposed to swine flu.

I know that the agency is concerned about appropriate "protocols" in dealing with the swine flu issues with AFGE. However, due to the nature of this emergency and due to the fact that it appears that numerous employees exposed to the swine flu virus have become ill, it is imperative that immediate action be taken to prevent a worse crisis from escalating notwithstanding "protocols".

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Witold Skwierczynski
President
AFGE Council 220

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From: loni_schultz@yahoo.com [mailto:loni_schultz@yahoo.com]
To: robert.pagan@ssa.gov; David Sheagley; Witold Skwierczynski
Cc: dennis wilson; Sheila Hampton; greg bachinski; Vicki J Ash; jay.dess@ssa.gov; Chris Mulholland; Charlie Estudillo; howardegerman@ssa.gov; Dana Duggins; debbie fredericksen; loni.schultz@ssa.gov
Subject: SWINE FLU PANDEMIC AT MILWAUKEE DOWNTOWN
Sent: Thursday, June 18, 2009 9:20 PM

To: Robert Pagan
Area Director II

From: Loni Schultz
Union President
Local 1346

RE: Swine Flu Pandemic at Milwaukee Downtown, Waukesha, and Greenfield

I received notice today that an employee was diagnosed with Swine Flu on Tuesday, June 16, 2009. I was notified tonight at 7:30 that three trainees from the CR training class are ill. I don't know if anyone else in the office is sick, but I suspect we have a serious problem in this office, and it is spreading.

I am demanding that you close the Milwaukee downtown office, Waukesha Office, and Greenfield offices immediately and the employees are given administrative leave to get tested. In addition, SSA should pay for the testing and medical costs as this is a worker's compensation issue. I want the Health Department called in to access the

situation and the office needs to be sanitized. Clorox bleach kill the virus. Three individuals have died in Milwaukee from the swine flu and they did not have a compromised immune system.

SSA has delayed taking necessary action once again and has exposed the employees to a deadly virus which is inexcusable. One of the employees who is sick has a one year child at home, whose immune system has not developed fully. It is incomprehensible that a Management could fail to take necessary action to protect employee's life's in such a manner. First we have a bomb threat that was kept hidden, and now we have a pandemic flu virus that could have been curtailed if Management had acted in a proper manner.

Please contact me on my cell phone in the morning at 608-386-1192 to discuss this. Time is of the essence and my first concern is for the health and safety of the employees in Wisconsin.

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