

State Bangkok flu reports not at outbreak proportions

By Robert Dorfman

Although there have been two confirmed reports of Omaha and Lincoln patients contracting Influenza Type A Bangkok, Nebraska apparently will not have an influenza outbreak.

Dr. Paul Stoesz, director of the disease control division of the Nebraska Health Department, said that Nebraska physicians are reporting illnesses consistent with Influenza Type A over the entire state. However, signs of the flu are waxing and waning in different parts of the state.

Sarpy County has had few reports of flu-like symptoms, while the North Bend secondary school closed last week because of a 23 percent absenteeism, Stoesz said. High school students and young adults, Stoesz said, seem most susceptible to the virus.

Stoesz warned that if the virus hit Lincoln, it would sweep through UNL by way of residence halls, fraternities, sororities and classrooms.

Dr. Garland Bare, director of the University Health Center, said he saw three

patients last week with flu-like symptoms. Bare noted that symptoms of influenza include a sudden fever, aches and pains.

"A cold, however, is a gradual illness that typically starts with the respiratory system and is associated with a high fever, aches and pains," Bare said.

Bare advises that the best way to prevent catching the flu is to avoid large crowds and fatigue. He also suggests influenza immunization as a preventive measure.

"Once one has the flu, the patient should drink six glasses of fluid daily, avoiding alcohol and caffeine," Bare said. "The patient should take aspirin every four to six hours. Tylenol is less effective than aspirin."

Bare said there is a new medication capsule—amantidine—that will reduce the severity of Influenza Type A.

Bare predicted that flu will peak within two weeks, but that physicians would know for sure by this week.

If a student suddenly feels ill, Bare advises he or she seek immediate care at the University Health Center.

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