

PHA praises health officials' response to swine flu

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The Public Health Association (PHA) is praising the response of health officials to the Mexican swine flu.

PHA National Executive Officer Dr Gay Keating says the Ministry of Health and health officials have to tread a fine line between unnecessarily isolating people and making sure infected people do not pass the flu on to others.

"Authorities have got the balance right, and have moved swiftly to prevent this influenza from spreading."

Dr Keating says health bureaucrats tend to get bad press, but an influenza outbreak such of this was a perfect example of how necessary their work was.

"It is health bureaucrats who have tracked down and quarantined people who may have been exposed to swine flu, they are running the crisis response to this potential pandemic, they are keeping the media and the public informed about the latest developments."

Dr Keating says messages for the public were simple.

"Germs are picked up on fingers, as well as through the air. It is therefore very important that people wash their hands properly. That means washing them for at least 20 seconds, and using soap, and drying hands for at least 20 seconds – longer if necessary.

"If you are going to sneeze, use a tissue and then throw it away. If you don't have a tissue, bend your arm and sneeze into your elbow – that will help keep germs from spreading."

For further information

Dr Gay Keating, 027 3414 708