



## **Swine Flu Talking Points**

### **Experts: Cause for Concern, Not Panic**

- The World Health Organization has stated clearly that no travel restrictions are in place.
- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), swine flu should not discourage people from traveling to or within the United States.
- Travelers, like all citizens, should heed the advice of medical experts when determining how best to manage health concerns.
- According to the CDC, individuals should take common sense steps to protect themselves, including: “wash your hands...get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.”
- Swine flu, according to medical experts, appears to be no more severe than annual seasonal flu.

### **Inform Travelers Responsibly, Without Discouraging Economic Activity**

- Governments and opinion leaders around the world must strike a delicate balance of accurately and adequately informing citizens of health concerns without unduly discouraging travel and other important economic activity.
- Given the fragile state of the American economy, our country cannot afford unnecessary panic.
- Recent health concerns, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Avian flu, provide useful guidance as governments, opinion leaders and travelers consider the appropriate response to swine flu.
- The 2003 SARS outbreak and more recently the bird flu threat are examples of an “infodemic” rather than an “epidemic.”
- According to the Asian Development Bank, the cost of SARS in terms of lost GDP for East and Southeast Asia was \$18 billion, primarily through downturns in tourist arrivals. Tourist arrivals in the most affected economies declined by 20 – 70 percent in April 2003, one month following the announcement of the SARS pandemic. Lesser affected Asian countries experienced declines of 15 – 35 percent, leading to a loss of nearly \$15 billion in economic impact.

### **Travel Industry Is an Important Resource to Government, Consumers**

- The Obama Administration has taken a measured approach to date and appropriately countered those who might discourage travel to or within the United States.
- We stand ready to assist the U.S. government and health experts in communicating critical information to travelers.
- The U.S. Travel Association has contacted all relevant agencies with an offer to help “in any way needed.” These agencies include the CDC and the Departments of Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, State and Transportation, as well as the White House public liaison office.