

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

Joe Arpaio, Sheriff



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ARPAIO SAYS SWINE FLU UNDERSCORES NEED FOR ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT:

WILL SUPPLY DEPUTIES WITH PROTECTIVE GEAR FOR ARRESTS OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS

JAILS ARE READY FOR POTENTIAL OUTBREAK

(Phoenix, AZ) Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio says it is estimated that over 90% of all illegal aliens arrested by his Anti Human Smuggling Unit come from areas south of Mexico City where the swine flu has already killed nearly 150 people.

In order to better protect his deputies, Arpaio will supply hundreds of protective gear kits and will strongly recommend that his 750 deputies use face masks and gloves in the field when they encounter and arrest illegal immigrants coming in from Mexico.

In addition, beginning Thursday, ICE-trained Sheriff's detention officers in the jails will begin screening all incoming inmates for swine flu symptoms. To better safeguard jail staff and inmates, anyone suspected of being exposed will be flagged for further medical evaluation and placed in isolation cells if necessary.

The Sheriff says his deputies and jail staff may be at a far higher risk of exposure to this virus, considering the thousands of suspected illegal immigrants they come in contact with on a weekly basis in the field and in the jails. Tuberculosis and chicken pox have already presented health concerns in the jails, and both diseases are primarily brought in by illegal immigrants

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The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office has arrested and investigated over 28,000 illegal aliens on the streets and in the jails in the last three years.

“No one has talked about the people who are coming into the United States illegally as being a potential source of the spread of swine flu,” Sheriff Arpaio said today. “Unlike those who legally enter this country, and thus can be easily checked for disease, the very nature of illegal immigration – evading authorities, and unchecked and untraceable contact with different people - actively promotes the spread of a communicable disease. If this health crisis doesn't serve as a wake-up call to politicians who advocate open borders and who fight this illegal immigration issue at every turn, then our nation could find itself in serious trouble on a number of levels.”

According to the Sheriff's statistics, of the 1290 felony human smuggling arrests his deputies have made since April 2006, between 90 and 95% of these illegal aliens come from near the area where health authorities say the disease may have originated – the southwestern state of Oaxaca.

“It takes an average of seven (7) days for illegal immigrants from the southern Mexican states to be smuggled into Maricopa County,” Arpaio says. “If illegal aliens are exposed to swine flu in Mexico, by the time they arrive in the U.S., the disease is fully infectious. Deputies are exposed to illegal aliens on average about 10 to 12 hours while arrests are in process. This is a new and very real peril that deputies, officers and the public now face.”

Arpaio's critics on his unwavering fight to slow the tide of illegal immigration include local politicians, members of the U.S. Congress, the Reverend Al Sharpton, and open border activists.

His policies have even drawn the attention of the U.S. Department of Justice, which is investigating Arpaio's illegal immigration operations and a move is underway to suspend his 287 G agreement. That agreement allows deputies to arrest people for federal immigration violations.

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“Today’s reality is this. There is a new and critical byproduct of the 287G program and that is protecting the health of the American public,” Arpaio says. “If this program is stopped and we cannot arrest and investigate illegal aliens as they are smuggled into this county, we may lose our only opportunity to determine if they are carriers of any disease.”

The Sheriff also says he supports stopping and searching all those entering the U.S. at the Mexican border if the crisis worsens.

As a former ranking official with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Arpaio was an instrumental part of then President Nixon’s ‘Operation Intercept’ in 1969 which halted the flow of drug entering the U.S. from Mexico.

“We stopped and searched every car coming in from Mexico,” Arpaio recalls. “For a time, we stopped the flow of drugs. The point is it worked then and it can work now. If we have the political will and there is a need to stop and search everyone attempting to come into the U.S. from Mexico, we can contain this health crisis and simultaneously curtail the importation of drugs and illegal immigrants.”

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