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H1N1 Timeline

Government defends speed of response

Over the weekend, both Health Minister **José Angel Cordova** and President **Calderón** defended the speed of the government's response to the emerging epidemic. The President said, "The world has the opportunity to take preventive measures and the time to avoid the propagation or minimize the spread of the disease ... because Mexico has an epidemiological alert system that adheres to World Health Organization standards." ([Presidencia 5/3](#), [Health Ministry press conferences](#))

| H1N1 Medical Tests | |
|--------------------|-------|
| 5/4/2009, am | |
| Total tests | 2,164 |
| Valid tests | 1,922 |
| Positive for H1N1 | 701 |
| Deaths | 26 |
| Non-fatal | 568 |

Following is a timeline of events from various sources:

- 3/18 Health authorities in Mexico City note increase in "Influenza like illnesses" (ILI)
- 4/11 WHO & PAHO seek info on outbreak in Perote, Veracruz; Government responds the next day
- 4/13 Death of adult woman in Oaxaca; later confirmed as first known H1N1 fatality.
- 4/17 Epidemiological alert issued to health professionals for "seasonal flu & atypical pneumonia."
- 4/18 Government issues public health alert
- 4/21 H1N1 case identified in California
- 4/22 Mexico sends lab samples from Oaxaca & Veracruz to Canada for analysis
- 4/23 Lab confirms H1N1 flu; Govt. issues health alert. Schools closed in Mexico City and surrounding cities.
- 4/24 Govt closes public facilities in Mexico City; weekend masses and soccer games held without public
- 4/25 President invokes emergency health powers
- 4/26 President addresses nation; puts death toll at 81
- 4/27 Schools ordered closed nationwide until May 6; WHO raises pandemic alert level to 4
- 4/28 Ministry of Health starts presenting data based of definitive lab tests; death counts revised downward
- 4/29 WHO raises pandemic alert level to 5; date of last known death (as of today); mandatory screening of international air passengers imposed; Govt. declares Monday, May 4 a holiday, creating a 5-day weekend
- 5/3 Health Minister José Angel Cordova says, "The epidemic is now in its phase of descent"
- 5/4 Confirmed death toll from H1N1 influenza stands at 26.

Key Dates

5/3: Start of federal election campaigns
7/5: National congressional, gubernatorial, and 5 other local elections.

Signs of normalcy start to emerge; schools to reopen

With the definitive lab tests for the **H1N1 influenza virus** showing stabilization in the spread of the outbreak, the government began relaxing some of the restrictions on public life. In an extensive interview, President **Felipe Calderón** cautioned, "to the extent that we are seeing fewer cases each day, it is a reflection that we are doing the right thing ... If we let down our guard, the virus, which continues to circulate, will probably rebound." The President and the state governors met today to discuss the next steps, and agreement was reached to reopen secondary schools on the 7th and primary schools on the 11th. In the capital, the Federal District government also authorized restaurants to reopen on the 7th if they adhere to safety guidelines, although nightclubs and other evening venues will remain closed. ([Presidencia 5/3](#), [Reforma 5/4](#))

No delay for election campaign start

The campaign for the July 5 elections formally started on May 3 despite the flu epidemic. A meeting of the heads of the IFE and the Electoral Tribunal, the Secretary of Government, and the Secretary of Health ruled out changing the electoral calendar. The PRD, the PAN, and the Social Democrats had all asked for a delay. The IFE and the Ministry of Health will coordinate recommendations for public events. ([Proceso 4/30](#))

Human Rights Watch hits military for abuses

Human Rights Watch published a new report on human rights violations by the Mexican armed forces. The report concluded, "While engaging in law enforcement activities, Mexico's armed forces have committed serious human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, killings, torture, rapes, and arbitrary detentions. ... None of the military investigations of army abuses analyzed here has led to a criminal conviction of even a single soldier for human rights violations." The Government Ministry responded by saying that all decisions of the military courts could be appealed to the civilian justice system, and that the Minister of Defense had agreed to accept all the recommendations of the National Human Rights Commission. ([Universal 4/30](#), [Human Rights Watch](#))

Gulf Cartel operative captured

One of the DEA's most wanted, Gregorio Saucedo Gamboa, 'el Goyo,' was captured in Matamoros. He is believed to be one of the top operators in the **Gulf Cartel**, controlling the key border points of Matamoros, Reynosa and Nuevo Laredo, and one of the founding members of its **Los Zetas** paramilitary arm. ([Presidencia 4/29](#))

Drug decriminalization measure passes with a divided PAN

A Government-supported proposal to de-criminalize possession of small quantities of drugs passed the Chamber of Deputies, despite opposition from many PANistas that had appeared likely to stall the measure. The final vote was 184 to 88, with 44 abstentions. The votes of all three major parties were split. The Senate has already approved the measure by a vote of 87-10. The law will decriminalize possession of up to 5 grams of marijuana, 500 milligrams of cocaine, and small quantities of other drugs. ([Reforma 4/28](#), 4/30, 5/1)

Congress recesses

Congress recessed with the passage of a flurry of legislation. The Senate passed 23 pieces of legislation in its final six hours of plenary sessions, most of which were not debated. The Permanent Commission, with 19 deputies and 18 senators, will manage legislative affairs until Congress reconvenes September 1. ([Reforma 5/1](#))