



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATEMENT FROM FLORIDA SECRETARY OF HEALTH

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The Florida Department of Health (FDOH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are investigating a possible case of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) in a 22-year-old female, Florida resident. We have determined this to be a suspected case of imported vCJD from the United Kingdom. All evidence indicates that her illness poses no threat to the public or agriculture industry in Florida and the rest of the United States.

Again, all of our information leads us to believe the affected individual represents a case of imported vCJD. While living in the United Kingdom, we believe the young woman was exposed to and contracted the disease more than a decade ago.

Although experience with this new disease is limited, all existing evidence indicates that it cannot be spread through the air or by physical contact. The Florida Department of Health, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the CDC are working closely together to gather more facts about this case. Updates will be provided as more information becomes available.

We urge the media and public to join the FDOH in protecting the privacy of the affected individual and her family during this most difficult time. More information and important web links on the disease, vCJD, can be found on the FDOH website at http://www9.myflorida.com/Disease_ctrl/epi/htopics/popups/cjd.htm

In the United Kingdom and parts of Europe, this disease of humans called vCJD has been associated with a disease of cattle called Mad Cow Disease, also known as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE). BSE has never been detected anywhere in the US or Florida. Florida residents wishing to ask questions about vCJD may call their local county health department toll-free at 1-800-480-7738.

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