

# H1N1 flu cases up sharply in Venezuela

June 12 2013

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The number of H1N1 swine flu cases rose sharply in Venezuela during the last week of May, the health ministry said Wednesday, refusing to disclose whether any deaths have been linked to the outbreak.

Health Minister Isabel Iturria, explaining why deaths would not be reported, blamed "political or economic interests" for creating alarm over the outbreak.

The ministry said there were 414 new cases of H1N1 in the week from May 26 to June 1, pushing the total number of cases from 724 to 1,138.

The virus was detected for the first time in Venezuela in 2009.

The current outbreak has surpassed one in 2011 that resulted in 900 cases and eight deaths.

Venezuela has been fiercely polarized since Nicolas Maduro was declared the winner of a disputed election in April to replace his mentor, the late leftist leader [Hugo Chavez](#). The centrist opposition has contested the results.

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