



TO: Parents of Washtenaw County Students

FROM: Diana Torres-Burgos, MD, MPH
Medical Director

DATE: August 28, 2009

SUBJECT: 2009-2010 Flu season (Seasonal and 2009 Influenza A H1N1)

The Flu season has been ongoing through the summer months due to the 2009 Influenza A H1N1 virus (formerly known as swine flu). As you may know, flu can be easily spread from person to person. Therefore, the Washtenaw County Superintendents and Public Health Department have been working closely over the summer following State and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines to take steps to reduce the spread of flu, both seasonal and H1N1, in your school. **We need your help to do this.**

Preventive measures you can take:

- **Teach your children to wash their hands frequently.**
- **Teach your children not to share personal items.**
- **Teach your children to cover their cough and sneezes.**
- **Keep your children at home if they are sick.**
- **Vaccinate your children for seasonal flu and H1N1 flu when vaccine becomes available.**

If your child is sick enough to stay home from school with flu-like symptoms, immediately report the illness to the school attendance office. This will help the school provide accurate information in its weekly disease reports to the Health Department. The Health Department will closely monitor flu trends, and will make decisions along with school officials regarding the best actions to take including school dismissal.

School Dismissal Policy

According to CDC guidelines, the goal is to keep schools open and functioning normally while also keeping students healthy during this flu season. School dismissals may occur if student and staff absenteeism due to the flu disrupts the normal functioning of school. CDC also recommends considering dismissal of schools if a large number of staff and students are at higher risk of flu-related complications. The length of time school will be dismissed will depend on the severity and extent of illness.

School Vaccine Clinics

School vaccine clinics have been recommended as part of a mass vaccination campaign against the H1N1 flu to protect the most affected groups. The largest number of Influenza A H1N1 cases so far has been in people between the ages of 5 and 24 years of age. We anticipate an increase in flu cases (both seasonal and Influenza A H1N1) once students return to school since infected students may act as a point of spread to other students and their families. You will be informed when and where H1N1 vaccine clinics will be scheduled.

Please keep in mind that this is a changing situation and we will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

For more information, visit www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO. For information about flu in our community, visit <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org> , <http://publichealth.ewashtenaw.org/healthportal> or call 1-734-544-6700.