



Community Unit School District 95
School Health Services



DATE: September 14, 2009

TO: CUSD 95 families, administrators and staff

FROM: Andrea Bonkowski RN, ILCSN and the District's Health Services Personnel

RE: Updated Guidelines for Pandemic H1H1 Influenza

The Lake County Health Department/Community Health Center has recently provided us with an H1N1 update. This new H1N1 virus did not go away after the summer and continues to make people ill, especially children and pregnant women. It may continue to change and may cause even more severe illness. In addition to H1N1, we expect to see illnesses that normally occur in the fall and winter months caused by regular seasonal flu and other contagious diseases.

The **best** prevention measure is vaccination and the Lake County Health Department/Community Health Center will be one of the many providers of the H1N1 flu vaccine within the Lake County Community. Plans are currently under way with Federal State and local health agencies to determine the best way to dispense and administer the vaccine once it becomes available. While much is still unknown, it is possible that the H1N1 vaccine will be available in some quantity by October 2009 and will be administered as a two-dose series over an interval of several weeks. **We highly encourage parents to have their child/children vaccinated to prevent them from becoming infected with the virus and to prevent spread to others in our schools.** Unfortunately I have no further information as to sites to receive the vaccine or if the vaccine will be given in the school setting. **I will keep you informed with current accurate information as I receive it from the Lake County Health Department and the Center for Disease Control.**

It is important that all schools take steps to reduce the spread of both types of influenza, provide a safe and healthy environment and keep schools open.

HERE ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS THAT CUSD 95 WILL FOLLOW:

- We will keep track of absentee rates for students, faculty and staff.
- We will establish baselines and recognize when sharp increases are occurring.
- **Whenever there is a 10% or greater absentee rate due to Influenza-Like-Illness (ILI); or if five or more unrelated students with ILI are seen in one day by the Health Office the Lake County Health Department/CHC Communicable Disease program will be notified.**
- PARENTS AND STAFF NEED TO NOTIFY THE BUILDING NURSE OF SYMPTOMS OF Influenza-Like-Illness (ILI) SUCH AS: **fever, cough, achiness, chills, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea and shortness of breath at earliest recognition.**
- The Center for Disease Control has changed the minimal required time frame that students and staff with Influenza-Like-Illness (ILI) must remain home to: at least **24 hours fever free without the use of fever reducing medication.** This is based on studies that show people with the Pandemic H1N1 influenza are most contagious in the earliest days of their illness and while they have fever.
- Keeping children home will help them get better faster and at the same time help stop the spread of the virus.
- **WE NEED YOUR HELP TO BE HONEST WHEN SELF-REPORTING SYMPTOMS AND DURATION OF THE ILLNESS.**

- A physician note will not be required for re-entry to the schools for students, faculty or staff.
- We strongly encourage that parents reduce the number of “unnecessary” visits to their child’s school during the school day.
- Children who are out ill for school **will not be allowed to participate in any afterschool activity.**
- Faculty and staff who are out ill for school **will not be allowed to participate in any afterschool activities.**
- The canceling of afterschool activities will depend on the absentee rate and trend and will be only done if absolutely necessary and with the guidance of the Lake County Health Department.

The following points are the most current recommendations from the Illinois Department of Public Health and Center for Disease Control:

- School closure is not advised for a suspected or confirmed case of novel influenza A (H1N1) and in general is not advised unless there is a magnitude of faculty or student absenteeism that interferes with the school’s ability to function. Students, faculty and staff may need more time to rest and recover at home than the minimal 24 hours fever free and should not suffer negative consequences because they need a longer time to recover. It is important to be flexible and supportive of all measures to keep children and staff out of school when they feel sick.
- Students, faculty or staff with ILI should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care even if using an antiviral medication.
- Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an ILI at arrival or become ill during the school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.
- Every morning parents and guardians should monitor their pre-school and school-aged children, while faculty and staff should self-monitor for symptoms of ILI.
- Ill students should not attend alternative child care or congregate in settings outside of school.
- School administrators should communicate regularly with local public health officials to obtain guidance about reporting of ILI in the school.
- Schools can help serve as a focus for educational activities aimed at promoting ways to reduce the spread of influenza, including hand hygiene, cough etiquette and try to maintain distance between people when possible.
- Students, faculty and staff should stringently follow sanitary measures to reduce the spread of influenza including covering their nose and mouth with a tissue, when coughing or sneezing use their sleeve if a tissue isn’t available, frequent hand washing with soap and water, or using a hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible.

Center for Disease Control guidance now focuses on ways to identify ill students and to keep those students away from the general school population until they are no longer infectious. For additional information on staying healthy, school guidance, the number of H1N1 cases and more go to: www.idph.state.il.us/h1n1flu/index.htm. Or feel free to contact the Lake County Health Department Communicable Disease program at (847) 377-8130