

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

September 3, 2009

For More Information Contact:Lori Kincaid Temple
(603) 271-6646
ltemple@ed.state.nh.us

Guidance to Help the Public Address H1N1

The New Hampshire Department of Education (DOE) has been working closely with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services and other agencies to provide updates and guidance about the H1N1 influenza (Swine Flu) and the possibility that H1N1 influenza may become widespread this fall. This information along with other resources can be found on the NH Department of Education Web site at www.ed.state.nh.us.

“One shared goal is to keep the schools functioning normally and open during this flu season,” said Commissioner of Education, Virginia M. Barry, Ph.D. “We are communicating with schools in New Hampshire on an ongoing basis and strongly encouraging them to put the recommended procedures in place to keep the children in our State healthy.”

Many schools have already started sharing information with parents about influenza or “the flu.” Parents need to know the signs and symptoms of the flu. H1N1 as well as seasonal influenza are respiratory illnesses, and the symptoms may include fever (100° F, 37.8° C, or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. Some people may also vomit or have diarrhea. All parents should ensure that they have a thermometer at home, know where it is, and make sure it works. Anyone who has a chronic health condition or becomes sick with flu-like symptoms should contact their healthcare provider for advice.

One of the most important messages schools are relaying is for sick children and staff to remain at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever, or do not have signs of fever, without using fever-reducing drugs. It is not okay to send a child to school after giving a drug to mask a fever because they will likely spread the illness they have to many more

- more -



children. Any child who is determined to be sick while at school will be sent home. Ideally, parents should think about making some back up plans to stay home with a child if they become ill.

Other prevention efforts are important too. Parents should teach their children to wash their hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. It is also important to teach children not to share personal items like drinks, food, or utensils. Finally, teach children to cover up their coughs or sneezes using their elbow, instead of their hand, when a tissue is unavailable. Parents need to do all these things themselves too and set good examples for their children.

The DOE, Office of School Health has a mailing list that provides information and resources on H1N1 and other issues that generally relate to the strong link between academics and health. To sign up to receive these updates go to <http://maillist2.nh.gov/mailman/listinfo/nhsn-friends>.

#