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October 15, 2009

**To:** Parents  
**From:** Peter Hasler, M.D., County Health Officer  
**RE:** Increase in Flu Activity

Dear Parents:

I have been speaking with school officials about H1N1 Flu and its impact on the schools. We have reviewed the steps the schools are taking to prevent spread of the infection. We will stay in frequent communication. I wish to take this opportunity to remind you of the advice of the Department of Public Health.

- **The H1N1 Flu is widespread in the county.** We know this by surveillance testing. Individual patients are not being tested by the Public Health Laboratory unless hospitalized.
- **H1N1 Flu is suspected when a person develops fever and cough.** Many viral infections cause these symptoms but influenza is usually more severe and has a sudden onset of fever, cough, body aches, sore throat, chills, headache, and vomiting. Most children who become sick recover within 3-7 days.
- **The following groups of patients are at increased risk** for severe disease and complications with influenza. Prompt medical evaluation by phone or appointment is very important. Treatment may be needed. If necessary, starting medication early helps in the recovery and prevention of complications from H1N1 Flu.
  - **Pregnant women**
  - **Children under two years of age**
  - **Children 2-18 years of age who have a medical condition** that affects the respiratory, immune, nervous or skeletal systems, such as chronic asthma, cystic fibrosis, cancer, cerebral palsy, or muscular dystrophy.
  - **Adults who have a medical condition** that affects the respiratory, heart, immune, kidney, nervous or skeletal systems, such as asthma, emphysema, heart failure, cancer, immune suppressing medications, diabetes, kidney failure, or multiple sclerosis.
- **Healthy children and adults** with suspected influenza should be taken care of in the home and away from others to decrease the spread of illness. They should rest, drink extra fluids and take fever & pain relievers as needed.
  - **Healthy children and adults** who have severe symptoms or begin to recover and then relapse with worse symptoms should contact their healthcare provider promptly. A complication from H1N1 Flu may develop that requires evaluation and treatment.

Healthy children may attend school even if there is a sick parent or sibling at home. However, at the first sign of illness, I recommend a child stay home. Children may return to school when the fever has been gone for 24 hours without medicines and they are ready to participate in classroom activities.

The H1N1 Flu vaccine will be arriving in the first part of November but the date is not certain. Private physicians and the Health Department will offer the vaccine to the community. Please call your doctor or the Public Health Department H1N1 Flu line for details 1-888-722-6358 or browse our website: [www.sbcluinfo.org](http://www.sbcluinfo.org).