



WARREN TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent
213 Mt. Horeb Road
Warren, New Jersey 07059
908/753-5300 (x5702)

May 1, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This is a follow-up to my letter of 4/28/09 and is intended to provide an update on information we have received in the Warren Schools concerning the “H1N1 flu” (also known as the “swine flu”).

The New Jersey Commissioner of Education held a conference call yesterday with all of the state’s school superintendents. A representative from the NJ Department of Health and Human Services briefed all of us on the latest developments of this flu strain, with a particular emphasis on sorting the medical facts out from the various rumors that may be making their way around various circles. Here is what we heard:

1. **There is no reason for panic or alarm** (but there is reason to be careful).
2. It cannot be emphasized enough that the best way to avoid contracting this flu is the same as avoiding any other flu strain. Guidance includes:
 - a. Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with warm water and soap.
 - b. Cough into one’s sleeve (as opposed to into the open air).
 - c. Avoid contact with anybody who may be sick.
3. If sick, a person should stay home until symptoms disappear. This pertains to people of all ages, including students. As a matter of clarifying priorities, under no circumstances should parents feel compelled to send their children to school just because NJASK testing is taking place—make up sessions will be available, and student and staff health certainly trumps any testing concerns here in Warren (as it should everywhere else).
4. It is important to try to distinguish flu symptoms (which include a fever) from seasonal allergy symptoms (typically do not include a fever). This is not always easy to do, so it is recommended that people seek the advice of their doctor should symptoms appear that **may** be indicators of the flu.

The Commissioner then shared with us the procedures to follow should schools need to be closed. It is important to emphasize at this time that nobody is recommending schools be closed in New Jersey. Should that change, school officials will work in concert with local health officials in making the decision. To that end, please know that I have a very close working relationship with Warren’s Health Officer, Mr. Kevin Sumner, and am in contact with him on a regular basis.

Lastly, the Commissioner directed New Jersey schools to diligently and carefully report any and all “clusters” of flu cases to the proper authorities, in addition to reporting any other circumstance that school health officials feel may be cause for concern. We will, of course, fully comply with that directive.

Our district website, www.warrentboe.org, has informational documents on the H1N1 flu strain as well as links to other sites with more information. Additionally, two **phone numbers** have also been established recently by state and county officials that might be of use to parents and families, as follows:

- (866) 321-9571 (New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services hotline to answer questions from the general public and from New Jersey health care providers)
- (908) 231-7155 (Somerset County Health Department hotline)

Please know that we will continue to monitor this situation on a constant, 24/7 basis and will share whatever information we get with the Warren school community in the most timely manner possible.

Sincerely,

James A. Crisfield

James A. Crisfield, Ed.D.
Superintendent