



WARREN TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

Office of the Superintendent
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December 22, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This letter is the latest installment in the ongoing dialogue between home and school concerning the “H1N1” flu (also known as the “swine” flu).

We just received the following information from the State of New Jersey regarding the expanded list of people who are now eligible to receive the H1N1 flu vaccine:

The State Department of Health and Senior Services announced that physicians, local and county health departments and other health care providers can now provide the H1N1 vaccine to the general public. Until now, the Department’s H1N1 vaccination program has been limited to individuals in specific target groups who were most at risk of serious complications from the flu. While it is still important for those in target groups to get vaccinated as soon as possible, it is important for all residents of the state – older than six months of age – to be vaccinated against H1N1. Vaccination remains our most effective tool to prevent the flu.

The decision to expand the vaccination to the general public was based on several factors. The level of H1N1 vaccine has significantly increased in the state – to over 2.25 million doses – and local and county health officials have indicated that H1N1 vaccine demand among individuals in the target groups has decreased. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recently recommended that states consider increasing vaccine access to the general public and more than half the states – including our neighbors – have expanded their vaccination programs to the general public.

Individuals should speak with their healthcare provider about availability of the vaccine and the general public health precautions to remain healthy. There are also many common sense approaches that everyone can take to prepare for this flu season to protect themselves and their families: wash your hands frequently, cover your cough and sneezes, and stay home from work or school if you are sick.

Several tools are available for New Jerseyans seeking an H1N1 flu shot:

- The DHSS website (<http://www.nj.gov/health>) has two flu shot locators to help individuals find public health clinics that are being planned and will be announced when the vaccine is available, as well as to find clinics with scheduled dates.
- New Jersey's H1N1 Information Hotline – 1-866-321-9571.
- Your physician, community health center, local pharmacy, local or county health department and/or hospital. Many doctors and health clinics are providing the vaccine to their patients, while local health departments, pharmacies and some hospitals are offering clinics to the public.

In addition, the Centers for Disease Control has an excellent webpage devoted to flu in the workplace at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/workplace>.

Any questions about the vaccine or the clinics can also be addressed to the Warren Health Officer, Mr. Kevin Sumner, at 732/356-8090.

Here in the Warren schools, we continue to keep a very close eye on attendance figures by school, and I can report that there has been nothing out of the ordinary to date for students or staff in that regard. We also continue to do everything we can to remind staff and students about the wisdom of the basic preventative measures mentioned above (such as covering coughs, washing hands, etc). Of course, as usual, we also take every opportunity (including this one!) to remind everyone that it is imperative that adults and children alike stay home when sick, coming back to work/school only after having been fever free for a 24 hour period (without the assistance of aspirin/Tylenol/Advil, etc.). Your continued vigilance in this regard is mission critical to keeping the flu at bay, and the continued home-school partnership we have in place that is dedicated to keeping our schools safe and healthy is something we very much appreciate and value.

Sincerely,

James A. Crisfield

James A. Crisfield, Ed.D.
Superintendent