

Franklin County



Flu Coordination Plan for Schools and Public Health

Franklin County School Superintendents Meeting

September 11, 2009

The novel H1N1 flu virus first appeared in April 2009 and by June it was declared a worldwide pandemic. H1N1 continues to spread, and unlike spring, we also have the added burden of seasonal flu circulating too. Given that schools are back in session, and given that H1N1 could become more severe, it is critical for education and public health to work closely together. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides clear and specific guidance about what schools can do to limit the spread of flu and prevent disruption of day-to-day school activities. Our discussion today is about how we plan to coordinate and communicate right here in Franklin County now and in the future, as the second wave of this H1N1 pandemic unfolds.

NOW: Recommended Strategies (Under conditions with similar severity to Spring 2009)

- Stay home when sick (*and until 24 hours after fever is gone without use of a fever reducer*).
 - Adopt policies to encourage staying home if ill (suspend perfect attendance awards and attendance requirements to be eligible for extracurricular activities).
- Separate ill students and staff.
- Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover your cough.
- Get a seasonal flu shot.
- Schedule routine cleaning.
- Consider selective individual school dismissal (closure). Public Health will work directly with the school district considering selective dismissal.
- Ongoing education and communication with parents, students and staff.

FUTURE: Recommended Strategies (When/If conditions become more severe compared to Spring 2009)

- Active screening for ill students and staff.
- High-risk students and staff stay home.
- Students with ill household members stay home.
- Increase distance between people at school.
- Extend the period for ill persons to stay home (*7 days*).
- Reactive or Preemptive school dismissals (Need to develop a local process).

CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERING SCHOOL DISMISSAL (*Collaborative decision-making, based on local conditions, involving public health and education leaders, parents and the community.*)

- Contact your health department about closing a school building/district.
- School officials and local public health officials will base decision on local conditions. Considerations include:
 - The number and severity of cases in an outbreak.
 - The risks of flu spread and the benefits of dismissal.
 - The problems that school dismissal can cause for families and communities.
 - Different types of dismissal are: selective, reactive or preemptive.

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CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERING SCHOOL DISMISSAL continued:

- Information, tools and guidance during an outbreak is provided in the ODH *School Closure Guidance document* at <http://www.odh.gov>.
- If your school district does close one or more building, please notify the Ohio Department of Education by calling Mary Lou Rush, (614) 466-2105, or (877) 644-6338 and submitting a completed influenza school closure report form by noon on the day of closure. The influenza school closure report form may be found online at <https://www.impactsiis.org/closing/>.

H1N1 VACCINE (Expected to be available in late October):

Right now a shortage of novel H1N1 vaccine is not expected, but the timing of flu vaccine availability and demand can be unpredictable and there is some possibility that initially, the vaccine will be available in limited quantities. Therefore, vaccine will be given according to the following priorities:

- 1) Pregnant Women
- 2) Caregivers of children less than 6 months of age
- 3) Health Care and Emergency Services Personnel
- 4) Children 6 months through 18 years**
- 5) Young adults 19 through 24 years
- 6) Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from flu
- 7) All persons 25 through 64 years
- 8) All persons 65 years and older

SCHOOL-BASED H1N1 VACCINATION CLINIC REQUESTS FROM PUBLIC HEALTH:

- 1) Allow Public Health to offer vaccination clinics within your district. The Franklin County jurisdiction goal is to offer clinics between the hours of 4pm and 7pm during the week.
- 2) Identify one primary contact from your district to work with public health on scheduling school-based clinics. Contact Elizabeth Kress by September 30th with the name (eakress@franklincountyohio.gov or 462-6668).
- 3) Identify an internal team to work with public health to organize details and help promote clinic information throughout your district.
- 4) Are you willing to have your school nurses give vaccinations with Public Health?
 - School personnel working in clinics are eligible to sign up as Medical Reserve Corps volunteer to assure liability coverage.

COMMUNICATION:

- Educational Council is the information conduit between public health and the schools.
- Monthly meeting with the school nurses (and appointed staff) and public health – 4th Tuesday of every month.
- Coordination with public health and school PIO's in the event of media coverage.
- Consider Crisis Management Plan for students and staff (should an unfortunate death occur).

RESOURCES: Educational Council Website - <http://www.edcouncil.org/h1n1.php>; Franklin County Board of Health and Columbus Public Health Pandemic Flu website - www.columbuspandemicflu.org; CDC – www.cdc.gov/h1n1.