

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Leadership...Service...Accountability

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To: School District Superintendents
Charter School Directors
Local School Boards
Principals
Local Health Department Health Officers
Local Health Department Nursing Directors

From: Larry K. Shumway, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Utah Office of Education



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Executive Director
Utah Department of Health



Date: September 15, 2009

Subject: H1N1 Influenza

The Utah State Office of Education and Utah Department of Health are writing to you jointly to update you on the status of H1N1 influenza prevention in Utah schools. We are providing you with materials and information to use for flu prevention. Should new cases be identified in school children, information is provided for how to manage these to minimize spread of the H1N1 influenza to other children and staff.

Vaccine may become available in mid-October to early November for priority groups:

- Pregnant women
- Healthcare workers and EMTs
- People caring for infants under 6 months of age
- Children and young adults from 6 months to 24 years
- People aged 25 to 64 years with underlying medical conditions (e.g. asthma, diabetes)

Most doses will be available in November. Although parents are strongly encouraged to immunize their children against H1N1 influenza, vaccination is not mandatory.

Your local health department will have information about immunization clinics in your district. If schools become sites for immunization clinics for school-aged children, school nurses should be utilized as coordinating liaisons between the schools and local

health departments. School nursing duties that are typically conducted during the fall, such as health screens, should be rescheduled for later in the year, if possible.

Information about H1N1 influenza is available from many sources. However, your primary source of information about management of H1N1 and its impact on school-based activities should be your local health department. Please maintain contact with the local health department in your district to coordinate school immunization activities and learn of changes as events and issues unfold this fall and winter.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Utah Department of Health, do not recommend that school closure be used to control spread of H1N1 in a school in most situations. Given the relatively mild illness caused by the novel H1N1 virus in most people, other approaches are more appropriate. All schools should make efforts to increase respiratory hygiene and hand washing. When the virus has been identified or is suspected in a school, students and staff who are sick should be separated from other students and staff until they can leave school. Allowances should be made for students and staff who are sick to remain at home to prevent spread of H1N1. School closure or exclusion of high risk children and teachers may be considered in special circumstances such as when rates of illness are disrupting education or in schools with large numbers of high-risk students. Regular consultation with your local health department is recommended when illness is occurring in schools. These recommendations might change if the severity of illness caused by the virus changes.

The CDC offers information and communication tools for schools at their website www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/. Utah Department of Health will maintain updated surveillance information at <http://health.utah.gov/epi/h1n1flu/index.html>; for school-related information, click on Special Groups.

Attachments:

Resources

Local Health Departments and Associated School Districts
Check List for Preparation for H1N1 in Schools