

Updates On H1N1 Virus For Schools (Taken From State Department Of Education)

The State Department of Education is working with the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare to update the H1N1 information webpage online at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/flu/>. Please check the page next week for the most up-to-date information to help you prepare for potential Pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza cases in schools. School-age children are particularly susceptible to the H1N1 virus, creating the potential for large numbers of cases with more hospitalizations and deaths among younger age groups.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is taking the steps necessary to provide H1N1 flu vaccine for possible use in the fall. However, the vaccine will not be available for several weeks after the school year starts. At this time, with what we know now about the H1N1 virus, schools will not be closed based on individual cases; however, high absenteeism in school(s) may lead to closures to stop the outbreak from becoming unmanageable.

To prepare and prevent the spread of disease right now, we recommend the following:

- Update your emergency plans and ensure all your contact lists are up to date. For more information visit <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/flu/>.
- Develop response and communications plans to ensure that students or staff with fever or flu-like symptoms do not come to school or are sent home.
- Encourage staff to stay home when they are sick.
- Advise parents to develop contingency plans should their children become sick and need to stay home or in the event of school closure.
- Advise parents not to send their sick children to a childcare setting.

Stay up-to-date with current conditions by visiting www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ or <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/flu/>.

If you have any questions, please contact the local health district in your area. For a full list of contacts, please visit <http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/HealthDistricts/tabid/97/default.aspx>.