



DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

111 North County Farm Road, Wheaton, Illinois 60187

(630) 682-7400

www.dupagehealth.org

October 9, 2009

Dear DuPage County School Parents, Students, and Staff:

The tragic death of a student from Naperville North High School has been confirmed to be related to novel H1N1 influenza, with further testing in progress to confirm a possible underlying condition. The health department extends its sympathy and deepest condolences to the student's family, and to the Naperville North High School community.

According to CDC, there have been more than a million cases of H1N1 flu in the U.S. this year. During the 2008-2009 flu season, there were 128 influenza-associated pediatric deaths, 60 of which were due to novel H1N1 influenza. In Illinois, there have been 19 deaths due to H1N1 influenza in 2009.

This is the first death with H1N1 influenza in a DuPage County resident. As has been noted in Illinois and around the country, fatalities due to influenza continue to occur, especially but not exclusively, when there are underlying medical conditions that increase the risk of severe illness.

As influenza activity increases during this unique influenza season, the DuPage County Health Department is encouraging increased awareness and actions to help control and prevent the spread of influenza, toward keeping our students and community safe and healthy.

Persons experiencing signs of severe illness (such as difficulty breathing, dehydration, confusion, pain or pressure in chest or abdomen) should seek medical attention immediately, and persons with underlying conditions, including pregnant women, should promptly contact their physician if they develop influenza-like illness.

Since influenza is primarily spread by direct contact with nose and throat secretions, there are measures we can all take to reduce our chances of becoming sick with influenza:

- **Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands often** with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** Symptoms of the flu include fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit, 37.8 degrees Celsius or greater), cough, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, and feeling very tired. For medical questions or concerns, contact your physician.
- **Stay home if you are sick** until at least 24 hours after there is no longer a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications). This will help reduce the number of people who may get infected.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw it away after use.
- **Do not share eating utensils or drinking containers.** Persons should not share straws, cups, glasses, water bottles used during sports or recreation, cigarettes, etc.
- **Get your family vaccinated** for seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu as vaccines are available.

The DuPage County Health Department will continue to collaborate with school officials and the DuPage Regional Office of Education toward closely monitoring disease activity, severity, and scope, in order to provide current recommendations in accordance with Illinois Department of Public Health and CDC guidance. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available, toward reducing the impact of influenza in our schools and community. For more influenza information and updates, please visit www.protectdupage.org, www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/, or www.flu.gov. For general information, call the H1N1 Hotline at 630-221-7600.

Sincerely,

THE DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Rashmi Chugh, M.D., M.P.H.
Medical Officer

Maureen McHugh
Executive Director

Everyone, Everywhere, Everyday

In an emergency go to www.protectdupage.org and tune into WDCB 90.9 fm radio.