



CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

November 4, 2009

As you may know, a new influenza virus called the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus – or sometimes commonly referred to as the swine flu virus, was first identified in the United States in April. The virus has caused illness ranging from mild to severe, including hospitalizations and deaths in adults and children. Many children have gotten 2009 H1N1 infection and there have been large outbreaks in some schools across the country. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended that children and young adults aged 6 months through 24 years be vaccinated against 2009 H1N1 as soon as the vaccine is available. Other groups recommended to get the first available doses of the vaccine include:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Health care and emergency medical services workers, and
- People ages 25 through 64 years who have certain health conditions such as HIV, diabetes, or heart or lung disease.

Vaccination is the best way to protect your child from this potentially serious disease! The Chautauqua County Health Department is working with your child's school to give the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine to children at school at no cost. We will be holding a free vaccination clinic for the Bemus Point Central School District on Monday November 30th at Bemus Elementary, and Tuesday December 1st at Maple Grove High School.

Enclosed is more information about the H1N1 influenza ("swine flu") disease and the vaccine as well as a form that includes options allowing you to either accept or refuse the vaccination for your child. If you refuse, the vaccination will not be given to your child. A permission form is enclosed. It must be completely filled out and **returned by November 24, 2009**. Be sure your signature is in the lower right corner box. Please remember to check off which type of the vaccine your child may have. There is no guarantee that there will be adequate amounts of any single type. The child will only be given the vaccine that is marked unless option 3 is checked. **Allowing Option 3 gives the Health Department the ability to choose a type at their discretion in case one type of vaccine is not available at that time.** Please let the school know if they have had a live vaccine within the past 4 mo.

In order to be protected, children nine years of age and younger will need two doses of vaccine spaced about 4 weeks apart. If in this age range, your child should obtain the second dose of vaccine from your health care provider.

If you have any general questions about the seasonal or H1N1 influenza viruses or vaccines, you may call 2-1-1 at any time. For more specific questions about the vaccine or vaccination clinics, please call the Health Department at 1-866-604-6789 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Your child's health care provider also can answer your questions about the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus and may be able to give your child the seasonal and H1N1 influenza vaccine. Please visit the CDC's 2009 H1N1 influenza web site at www.flu.gov and also <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents> for information especially for parents.

Sincerely,

Christine Schuyler, BSN, MHA
Public Health Director