



Iowa Department of Public Health
Promoting and Protecting the Health of Iowans

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Memorandum

DATE: 1 May 2009
TO: Iowa School Officials
FROM: Dr. Patricia Quinlisk, MD, MPH
Medical Director
Iowa Department of Public Health
SUBJECT: **Key Messages for Iowa School Officials Regarding Novel Influenza A (H1N1)**

Background:

Currently, Iowa has no probable or confirmed cases of Novel Influenza A (H1N1) in any school students, employees, or volunteers. We believe students can safely attend classes, thus schools should remain open at this time. Public health officials are monitoring the situation carefully and will modify these recommendations as the situation warrants.

While the current situation does not warrant school closure, if this novel flu continues to spread and students become ill, it may become necessary for public health officials to consider recommending closing schools for a period of time. Should this occur, Iowa public health officials will work with local public health officials (county or city) to assess the situation and make recommendations regarding school closures to local school administrators. All decisions will be made in consultation with school administrators and officials from the Iowa Department of Education.

Information that will guide this decision making process may include: number of students with symptoms, what those symptoms are, date of symptom onset, date of diagnosis, dates of school attendance.

Actions requested of School Officials in Iowa:

School officials should communicate the importance of preventing flu with parents and students. The following recommendations can help keep children healthy and prevent outbreaks in schools. These recommendations will also be included in a "Dear Parent" letter that is available from IDPH.

It is essential that no student, employee, or volunteer attends school with flu-like symptoms. Symptoms of flu-like illness include: fever (over 100 degrees F.), cough, sore throat, or runny nose. Some additional symptoms may be experienced with this strain of flu, including muscle pain, fatigue, and sometimes vomiting or diarrhea. Should a student, employee, or volunteer develop symptoms while at school they should be sent home immediately.

This is an evolving situation, therefore we will keep you updated with new information and guidance as it becomes available.

You may also get information at www.idph.state.ia.us and www.cdc.gov or the 24 hour toll-free hotline at 1-800-447-1985.