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CLERMONT COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

The 2009 H1N1 influenza virus also known as Swine Flu is an increasing concern in communities across the United States including here in Clermont County. 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. To reduce the spread of disease caused by H1N1 influenza, a vaccine will soon become available. 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 flu 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 a weakened immune system, HIV, asthma, diabetes or heart or lung disease.

Vaccination is the best way to protect your child from this potentially serious disease. The Clermont County General Health District is working with your child's school district to give the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine to children at a school-based clinic. We anticipate holding these school vaccination clinics beginning in late October, and your child's school will let you know the specific date, time and location of their clinic once vaccine is on hand.

To assist us in planning for your school district's vaccination clinic we are asking for your input. Attached to this letter is a *Vaccination Interest Form* that we are asking you to complete and return to your school. On this form you are asked to indicate whether or not you will be planning on having your child receive the H1N1 vaccine at your school's immunization clinic. Please complete one form for each child you have in school. This form is **not** a consent form and you are free to change your mind later—we are simply trying to get an idea of how many vaccinations and staff we should plan on allotting to your school district for the clinic. H1N1 vaccine will be available at other locations such as physicians' offices and pharmacies, so check with your child's primary care provider if you prefer for your child to be vaccinated in their office.

The H1N1 vaccine will be available as either an injection ("flu shot") or as a nasal spray (Flu Mist). Most individuals can receive the injectable ("shot") form of the vaccine but some people cannot receive the nasal spray vaccine due to medical conditions and other health issues. Vaccine Information Statements about both types of vaccine have been posted on the Health District's web site (www.clermonthealthdistrict.org.) Copies of these sheets will be sent to

you later in the month as we get closer to the date of the actual clinics. It is important that you carefully read these materials before making a decision about which type of vaccine you would like your child to receive. For more information about H1N1 flu or the H1N1 vaccine, please visit the CDC's 2009 H1N1 influenza web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> or the Health District's web site. Questions and concerns about the vaccine and whether or not your child should receive it should be discussed with your healthcare provider **prior to the school vaccination clinic date**. Because this will be a large scale event, the Health District will be unable to address these types of concerns at the school clinic.

Here are some additional important points regarding your school district's vaccination clinic:

- Vaccination for H1N1 flu is recommended but getting vaccinated is completely voluntary.
- Children through 9 years of age will need two doses of H1N1 vaccine, given about a month apart, to be adequately protected. Individuals aged 10 years and older will only need one dose.
- There will be no cost for the H1N1 shots given at the school vaccination clinic.
- Children in the fifth grade and below will need to have a parent, guardian or designated adult present at the clinic to receive the H1N1 vaccination.
- Children in sixth grade and above are not required to have a parent, guardian or designated adult present at the clinic to receive the H1N1 vaccination.
- Based on limited availability of vaccine, the Health District will only be vaccinating school children and their younger siblings at the school based clinics.
- A completed consent form must accompany your child in order for them to receive the vaccine at the school clinic. A legal parent or guardian must complete and sign the form for any child under the age of 18 years. Consent forms for the H1N1 vaccination will be sent home at least one week prior to the clinic date.
- **The Health District is looking for nurses to assist with H1N1 flu vaccinations at the school-based clinics. Nurses with experience giving injections who are interested in working at these clinics should visit the Health District website at www.clermonthhealthdistrict.org for more information.**
- Copies of the materials you have received today and additional information regarding the H1N1 vaccine may be available on your school's web site. You are encouraged to utilize this resource.

In addition to receiving the H1N1 vaccine, everyone is encouraged to follow public health advice to prevent the spread and help WHACK the flu: Wash hands regularly, Home is where you stay when you are ill, Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, Cover coughs and sneezes, and Keep your distance from people who are coughing and sneezing. Thank you for your participation and cooperation with this important vaccination effort.

Sincerely,



Marty Lambert
Health Commissioner
Clermont County General Health District