



# HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

## PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION

*Healthy People Living in Healthy Communities Throughout El Dorado County*

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To: El Dorado County Schools

From: Olivia Kasirye, MD, MS  
El Dorado County Health Officer

Date: August 10, 2009

Subject: Novel Influenza guidelines

This letter provides guidance to decrease exposure to regular seasonal flu and H1N1 flu while limiting the disruption of day-to-day activities and the vital learning that goes on in schools. The following guidance pertains to conditions with similar severity as in spring 2009. El Dorado County Health Services Department, (EDCHSD), will continue to monitor the severity and disease burden of this virus and update the current guidance as more information is obtained.

### ***Currently Recommended school responses***

- **Stay home when sick:** Those with flu-like illness [Fever  $\geq 37.8^{\circ}$  (100.0<sup>0</sup>F) and a cough and/or sore throat] should stay home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. Fever-reducing medicines include medications containing acetaminophen or ibuprofen, such as, Tylenol, Advil, or Motrin. Aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) should not be given to children or teenagers who have influenza; this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome. Individuals should stay home even if they are using antiviral drugs.
- **Separate ill students and staff:** Students and staff who appear to have flu-like illness, as defined above, should be sent to a room separate from others until they can be sent home.
- **Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:** The new recommendations emphasize the importance of the basic foundations of influenza prevention: stay home when sick, wash hands frequently with soap and water when possible, and cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or a shirt sleeve or elbow if no tissue is available).
- **Routine cleaning:** Special cleaning with bleach and other non-detergent-based preparations are not necessary. School staff should clean areas that students and staff touch often with the cleaning products they typically use.
- **Early treatment of high-risk students and staff:** People at high risk for influenza complications who become ill with influenza-like illness should speak with their health care provider as soon as possible. Early treatment with antiviral medications is very important for people at high risk because it can prevent hospitalizations and deaths. People at high risk include those who are pregnant, have asthma or diabetes, have compromised immune systems, or have neuromuscular diseases.
- **Consideration of school closure:** School administration should work closely with EDCHSD to determine the need to close schools. The decision to close a school will be made on a case by case basis depending on the particular situation.

Should you have any questions please contact Olivia Byron-Cooper at (530) 621 6374