

September 1, 2009

Dear Parents,

H1N1 flu (referred to as swine flu) is a new flu virus circulating in our community and causing illness in people. This virus is spreading from person to person in much the same way that regular seasonal flu spreads. Flu virus does not normally circulate during the summer months and as we enter the fall and winter, health officials anticipate the reemergence of H1N1 flu cases in schools. As we start this new school year, we are asking for your attention and assistance in helping to prevent the spread of disease in our school.

Education is an important tool in preventing illness. Parents should use this time to review with children proper hygiene habits to stay healthy. These are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like H1N1 flu. These precautions are outlined in the "Swine Flu Fact Sheet" posted on our school web site.

We are working closely with the Hamilton County Public Health to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our school. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

We realize the news media has been highlighting schools as possible distribution sites for the vaccine. Our school district is working with Hamilton County Public Health to plan for mass vaccination clinics in our schools. Vaccinating your child is voluntary and we will be proactive in sharing information with you.

School-based clinics will only serve to vaccinate the students attending our school district. Since the availability and demand for vaccine can be unpredictable, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified five key populations that are a priority to receive the vaccine:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than six months of age.
- Health care and emergency services personnel
- Persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years of age – **This group includes children in our school.**
- People ages 25 through 64 years with chronic health disorders or weakened immune systems

Please understand this is the reason we are only able to accommodate vaccination for enrolled students at these clinics. Hamilton County Public Health is encouraging others in the key populations to seek the vaccine through their health care provider.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have additional questions or concerns please contact Kathleen Johnson RN at St. Antoninus School ~ 922-2500.

Kathleen A. Johnson RN
School Nurse