



DATE: October 19, 2009

TO: Parents/Guardians

RE: **Novel H1N1 Vaccination Consent Form**

FROM: Stearns County Human Services, Carol Eickhoff, Supervisor of Health Protection & Promotion Unit
Benton County Human Services, Cynthia Heltunen, Public Health Educator
St. Cloud Area School District 742, Elisabeth Lodge Rogers, Executive Director of Student Services

As you may have heard, a new influenza virus, called the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, was first identified in the United States in late April 2009. Many children have gotten 2009 H1N1 infection and there have been large outbreaks in some schools across the country. The virus has caused illness ranging from mild to severe symptoms in adults and children. 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 doses of 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine are:

- 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 Minnesota Department of Health, Stearns County Public Health, and Benton County Public Health is working with the St. Cloud Area Schools to give the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine to children at school. The vaccine will be available by either nasal mist or an injection and the schedule for administering them will be based on which type of vaccine is received from the MDH first. We will hold vaccination clinics within the next few weeks, and your child's school will let you know the specific dates once vaccine is on hand. Children through age 9 should have two (2) doses of vaccine spaced about four (4) weeks apart. **There will be no cost to you for this vaccine.**

Please read the "What you need to know" form included with this letter about the disease and the vaccine. **You must complete, then sign and date the attached consent form to accept vaccination for your child and return it to the school by October 26th.** If you accept vaccination, the vaccine will be given to your child when it is on hand. School staff will let you know when the vaccination clinic is scheduled. **If, at any time, you change your mind about having your child vaccinated, please provide, in writing, your withdrawal of consent to the School Health Office.** Giving consent early will ensure that your child is ready to receive the vaccine as soon as it is on hand. **If you do not sign the consent or if your child is ill with a temperature greater than 100°, your child will not receive the vaccine.**

If you have any questions about the vaccine or the vaccination clinics, please call: Stearns County Public Health at (320) 656-6000 or Benton County Public Health at (320) 968-5087. Please visit the CDC's 2009 H1N1 influenza web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> and also <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents> for more information especially for parents. Your child's health care provider also can answer your questions about the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus and will be able to give your child the seasonal influenza vaccine and may be able to give your child the 2009 H1N1 vaccine.