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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Ella Boyd, VMD
Public Health Coordinator

October 19, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you may have heard, a new influenza virus called the H1N1 influenza virus was first identified in the United States in April 2009. H1N1 has caused illness ranging from mild to severe. While most people who have had H1N1 have recovered without needing treatment, hospitalizations and deaths from infection with this virus have occurred. Whereas seasonal flu usually affects the elderly population and children under the age of two, H1N1 was seen this past spring spreading rapidly among children, teens and young adults.

There have been large outbreaks of H1N1 in some schools across the country. Vaccination against H1N1 is the best way to protect your child from this potentially serious disease. The vaccine is available in two forms, injectable vaccine and nasal flu mist vaccine. Due to limited amounts of vaccine that was received by the Ocean County Health Department, the Health Department will begin to distribute the vaccine to those groups at highest risk for serious illness or death as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) beginning the week of October 19, 2009.

The Ocean County Health Department is collaborating with Ocean County schools to use as sites to distribute the vaccine in addition to providing schools with updated H1N1 influenza information.

Appointments can be made to receive the **H1N1 injectable vaccine** by calling the Ocean County Health Department at 732-341-9700, ext. 7502, from 8 a.m. through 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, for clinics beginning the week of October 19th. With limited supplies, the Ocean County Health Department will be offering this vaccine to pregnant women, children 6 months to 59 months of age, and children from 5 to 18 years of age that have chronic medical conditions. Those seeking the vaccine will be screened by a registered nurse regarding risk factors and educated about the vaccine.

The Ocean County Health Department will be holding two (2) **H1N1 nasal flu mist vaccine** clinics this week. Based on current CDC guidelines, healthy children aged 2 – 18 years

without chronic medical conditions or weakened immune systems are recommended to receive the nasal flu mist vaccine. The vaccine is not for pregnant women. It is also not recommended for anyone who lives with or has close contact with someone with a weakened immune system. A screening process with a registered nurse will take place before the administration of the vaccine.

All children under 10 years of age will need 2 doses of either the injectable or the nasal flu mist in approximately one month after the first dose.

Any child under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to sign a consent form for either vaccine.

As the Ocean County Health Department receives more vaccine, it will continue to set up clinics following CDC guidelines that will include additional high risk groups. High risk groups include pregnant women, parents and caregivers of children less than 6 months of age, health care workers, children 6 months to 24 years, and people 24 years to 64 years with chronic illness. Once the total population of those considered at high risk has been offered the vaccine, vaccine will be available for anyone who wishes to receive it. The OCHD will have all clinic dates and times as they are established, available on their website at www.ochd.org.

If you wish to make an appointment or have any questions about the vaccine or the vaccination clinics, please call the Ocean County Health Department Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 732-341-9700, ext. 7502, or the New Jersey H1N1 Hotline at 1-866-321-9571, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please visit the CDC's 2009 H1N1 influenza website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> and also <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents> for more information written especially for parents.

Sincerely,

Ella Boyd, VMD

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