Shasta County

Health and Human Services Agency

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Dear School Official:

As fall approaches and children are returning to school, we want to update you on new and/or revised recommendations around Pandemic H1N1 and seasonal flu. Over the summer, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other agencies have developed recommendations for schools on how best to prepare and prevent children, school staff and the community from being infected with influenza in the new school year.

In this packet, you will find:

- A sample letter to parents.
- Guidance for school administrators, school nurses and teachers, which we encourage you to share within your school district
- A fact sheet to keep in your front office and staff rooms to serve as a quick reference

Some of the recommendations for the 2009-2010 school year are different than those given in the spring. Information in this packet is for any influenza virus circulating during the school year, not just the new Pandemic H1N1 2009 influenza. Changes to previous recommendations include:

- A focus on keeping schools open and sending ill students/staff home, rather than closing the entire school when flu-like symptoms are found
- Students and staff experiencing flu-like symptoms should stay home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (without use of fever-reducing medications).
- Students and staff considered at highest risk for complications from the flu should be encouraged to get vaccinated with both seasonal and Pandemic H1N1 flu vaccine.
- Students and staff should be encouraged to practice good hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water **or** alcohol-based hand cleaner when soap and water are not available.

The above recommendations and others are detailed in: *Preparing for the Flu (Including 2009 H1N1 Flu), A Communication Toolkit for Schools (Grade K – 12)*. The toolkit includes information that will be useful during this year's flu season, including a list of what schools can do to prepare for flu response this school year (page 9 and 10).

A conference call to discuss this packet is scheduled for Friday, September 4th at 1:00 p.m. Please call the following toll free number: 888-242-1836 (Access code: 2648972). Regular communication between School and Health Officials is essential to minimize the effects of this flu season. To facilitate sharing of information with

our community partners, an H1N1 Pandemic Flu Message line has been established at (530) 225-3762 so school officials can speak directly to a Public Health Official or leave a message which will be answered ASAP. School officials can also contact us via a special email account: DOC45@co.shasta.ca.us. Further information for you and the public is also available at our Shasta County Public Health website at www.shastapublichealth.net.

Thank you for your continued commitment in preventing the spread of influenza. We hope this information helps to keep your students and staff healthy. We truly appreciate your efforts.

Sincerely,

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