



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

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TO: Superintendents

FROM: June St. Clair Atkinson.

Jeffrey P. Engel, M.D.  
State Health Director

RE: 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccination

Cases of 2009 H1N1 influenza infections continued to occur in the United States and around the world over the summer. Younger persons are at increased risk of infection. The U.S. 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 vaccine is available.

The Division of Public Health and the Department of Public Instruction encourage collaboration with your local health department to help assure that school age children are vaccinated against the H1N1 virus. While it is not mandatory, keep in mind that vaccinating children at school can help meet the demand for convenient, timely vaccination and create a healthier learning environment for students. Not only will this opportunity provide protection to our students and their families, it will decrease the transmission of H1N1 throughout our communities.

#### Important points:

- Flu vaccines are safe and effective. They're the best way to prevent influenza.
- Children can become very sick from the flu. Approximately 17% of our school children have chronic health conditions that put them at increased risk of dying from the flu.
- The H1N1 vaccine will be manufactured by the same drug companies using the same process as seasonal flu vaccine.
- One or two doses of the H1N1 vaccine may be recommended, pending the results from current clinical trials.
- Seasonal flu vaccine will not provide protection from H1N1.
- All flu vaccines are voluntary for everyone in North Carolina. The vaccine itself is being provided by the federal government, but in some settings, an administration fee may be charged.
- Seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccines can be given simultaneously (except if both are live virus [nasal spray] vaccines.)
- Each public school district has at least one registered nurse that can help coordinate vaccination clinics.

If you have questions, please contact your local health department or the State Immunization Branch at 919-707-5550 or DPI contact or DPH Regional School Nurse Consultant. For further information about school H1N1 vaccination clinics, you can also visit this website of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/slv/>

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