



Milwaukee Public Schools

July 2009

Dear MPS Family:

The Novel H1N1 (Swine flu) virus has made many Milwaukee residents ill. Medical experts are concerned that we will continue to see cases through the fall, and that the virus may be more severe. *This is not a time for fear, but instead, a time for preparation.*

There are steps that families can take now to guard against getting the flu, including establishing access to health care if you or your children do become ill. *All members of your family should:*

- Wash hands frequently and regularly.
- Cover your cough. Cough into your upper sleeve or into a tissue and discard properly.
- Learn the flu symptoms — fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, headache and body aches.
- Stay home from work or school if you have flu symptoms and see a doctor if symptoms persist.
Do not send a sick child to school or daycare.
- Update all immunizations!

There is some new advice to share with you. Please read the following steps carefully.

- Develop a plan if your child becomes sick and needs to stay home, or if your child's school is closed.
- Talk to your child about the flu to decrease fear and to ensure he or she has accurate information.
- When a Novel H1N1 vaccine becomes available, please see that children get the immunization. It is possible that swine flu vaccinations will be provided at some school sites. MPS will provide details when they are available.
- Find out where you could receive food assistance if your child's school is closed and you have no access to school meals. See "Resources" list on this letter.
- If you have no regular access to a doctor, take time to learn about health clinics and other resources that are available in the City of Milwaukee. See "Resources" list on this letter.
- Apply now for Badgercare coverage if you are without healthcare. **Call Badgercare at (800) 362-3002 to apply.** There are some eligibility rules. Badgercare* is Wisconsin's comprehensive health care program for families who are income-eligible.

Milwaukee Public Schools understands families may need assistance with health care and food during these tough economic times. We are providing these resources and sharing this information to help our families prepare if the Swine Flu, or any severe strain of the virus, becomes an issue in the future. We stand behind the following advice: **"Don't be scared, be prepared."**

If you have any questions about the Swine Flu, call the Milwaukee Health Department hotline at (414) 286-3616 or visit the Health Department Web site at <http://www.milwaukee.gov/health>. MPS follows the guidance of the City of Milwaukee Health Commissioner and other authorized health agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in all public health matters.

One last thing to remember: please be certain your child's school has your current contact information, including telephone number. We will send important swine flu updates through our automated phone service during the school year. We will also continue to post updates online at <http://mpsportal.milwaukee.k12.wi.us/portal/>. Visit our Web site often. We are also on *Twitter* as MilwaukeeMPS.

Thank you for your time. We are eager for the new school year to begin and we continue our commitment for safe and healthy classrooms.

William Andrekopoulos
MPS Superintendent of Schools

*The following documents may be needed for Badgercare, FoodShare and other community resources: 1) Certified Birth Certificates; 2) Wisconsin State ID or Driver's License; 3) Social Security Cards.



IMPORTANT IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION: There are important changes in state immunization laws which require *new* vaccinations, required for the 2009-2010 school year.

NEW! Immunization Requirements:

- *If your child is going into Kindergarten (K5) or 1st grade:* Your child will need **two doses of varicella** (chicken pox vaccine) before the start of school in September.
- *If your child is going into 6th or 7th grade:* Your child will need **two doses of varicella and one dose of the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) vaccine** (unless they have had a tetanus shot within the last five years) before the start of school in September. Please make sure the school has the dates of both.
- *If your child is going into 9th or 10th grade:* Your child will need **one dose of the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) vaccine** (unless they have had a tetanus shot within the last five years) before the start of school in September. Make sure the school has the date of either shot.
- *If your child is going into 12th grade:* Your child will need **two doses of varicella and one dose of the Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis) vaccine** (unless they have had a tetanus shot within the last five years) before the start of school in September. Please make sure the school has the dates of both.



MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

For free immunizations or to check your family immunization records, contact your health care provider or the City of Milwaukee Health Department at **(414) 286-8034**.



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IMPORTANT COMMUNITY RESOURCES:

Call **2-1-1** from most phones, or the following number from a cell phone: **(866) 211-3380** for:

- Information on free or low-cost health care and clinics
- Locations of food programs and meal sites

Call **(800) 362-3002** to find out how to apply for Badgercare, Wisconsin's healthcare program for income-eligible families.

Call **(888) 947-6583** for information on Foodshare, Wisconsin's program to provide food services for families on low or fixed incomes and for the disabled and unemployed workers.



School Nursing



Mark Your Calendar!

School starts: **Tuesday, September 1**
Proposed school start for year-round schools:
August 3