



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

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MEMORANDUM

To: School Principals
From: Timothy J. McNiff
Date: October 1, 2009
Re: H1N1 Policy for the Archdiocese of New York

In response to Archbishop Dolan's consultation with Bishop DiMarzio last week regarding the H1N1 flu, the decision has been made to have a consistent New York City Catholic school response to influenza immunization in the two dioceses.

Specifically, both dioceses will observe the following practices:

- Allow Catholic school students to be vaccinated for seasonal and H1N1 flu in our own schools. The vaccination program will be conducted by the NYC Department of Health. In doing so, our responsibility will be limited to informing parents of this option, distributing any informational materials from the Department of Health, and supervising the students who proceed to the location in the school where they would be vaccinated.
- A letter sent home to the parents would specify that, while we encourage parents to have their children vaccinated, it is strictly a voluntary decision made by the parents.
- In Catholic schools that do not have access to a Department of Health nurse, the Department will reallocate their resources so that a 'team' of professionals will be available this fall to provide flu shots at those Catholic schools.
- Schedules and dates for the vaccination program have not yet been confirmed.

I should also note, the private Catholic schools in the city will be given the same opportunity to participate in this program as our Archdiocesan schools.

Data Tracking Process in New York City Schools

- The Influenza Tracking Program data entry will be conducted by the staff of the three Catholic elementary District Superintendents (Manhattan, Bronx and Staten Island) and staff of the office of Catholic secondary schools, not by school nurses or school staff.
- Each day, Catholic schools with 10 or more ILI cases (sent home that day) will call in the attendance and number of ILI cases for that school on that day to their District Superintendent.
- This information will be entered by the staff of the three elementary District Superintendents and one high school Superintendent.
- This system will also insure that the Office of the Superintendent of Schools is informed daily on the health status of all schools.
- ILI cases will not be entered until at least 10 ILI cases are reported on the same day, at the same school.

Archdiocesan Schools Outside of New York City

The Westchester County Department of Health Deputy Commissioner for Public Information Caren Halbfinger has reported the following information:

- Westchester County does not have plans to offer a school-based flu (seasonal or H1N1) vaccination program. Given the 23 separate public school districts in Westchester, the County Health Department has decided to encourage the public, especially those at high risk, to obtain the flu vaccinations from their physicians (who must go on-line and register for certain doses) or public health facilities. No vaccinations will be administered in schools in Westchester County.
- In addition, the Westchester County Health Department will not be hosting an on-line H1N1 reporting program (as is the case in NYC) or phone-in H1N1 monitoring program. While the Deputy Commissioner was aware of the ILI Tracking Program in NYC with its pre-designated benchmarks, alerts and action icons, Westchester has no formal reporting system in place at all.
- However, the Archdiocese may consult with county health officials at any time their counsel is needed.
- At this time, the Archdiocese of New York is engaged in dialogue with Departments of Health for the Upper Counties. If specific recommendations are made, they will be immediately communicated to principals and District Superintendents.