



City of Milford, Connecticut

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Dear Parents,

News about novel H1N1 (swine) influenza continues to evolve quickly. Recent school closures in New York City have caused much concern. We are working together to monitor the situation closely and prepare Milford for the events to come in the next few weeks and months. Now is the time for us to plan and prepare.

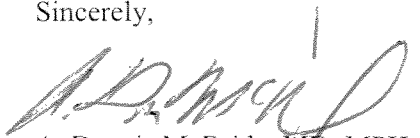
The Milford Health Department and Milford Public Schools have been developing policies, plans, and procedures to protect our children and minimize the impact of novel H1N1 influenza virus on our community. In many instances, school closures have been utilized as a tool to assist with this goal. However, school closures will not completely eliminate this virus. School closures can be extremely disruptive to children and carry a heavy social and economic burden for families. The health of our children and school staff are our highest priority. At present, the decision to close schools will be made based on several factors including school absenteeism, the extent of Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) in the school, and the most current public health and clinical information. These decisions will be handled on a school-by-school basis with careful deliberation. Please note that we do not have any indication that school closures are imminent at the time of this letter.


Although so far novel H1N1 influenza virus is considered “relatively mild,” there is good evidence that this virus spreads easily and quickly and has had a large impact on children under the age of 18. Though this virus may seem mild for some, there is also good evidence that novel H1N1 influenza virus has *at least* the same risks for people with special health conditions (i.e. asthma, diabetes, etc.) as seasonal influenza. Individuals with such conditions should be under close supervision by a medical provider to ensure they receive adequate medical care and appropriate immunizations when vaccines are available.

As we prepare on a citywide level, we encourage you to make concrete plans for yourselves and your family. For example, talk to your family, employers, and neighbors about emergency plans should schools close or should you need to stay home with a sick child or household member.

Though the school year is quickly coming to a close, we assure you that our planning and preparation will continue over the next few months to protect the health of our residents. For updates on novel H1N1 influenza virus prevention, planning and response activities, please visit the City of Milford website at www.ci.milford.ct.us or call the Milford Health Department at 203-783-3285.

Sincerely,


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Health Director, City of Milford


Harvey B. Polansky, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools