



Information regarding the H1N1 Vaccine for Your Child

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Vaccines are one of the most effective methods that we have to prevent many illnesses including seasonal influenza which is commonly referred to as the flu. Every year, thousands of people in our community receive a seasonal flu vaccine either in the form of a shot or nasal spray.

This year there is a new flu called 2009 H1N1 Influenza. It is different from seasonal flu in that it affects younger people more severely than older people. Many youth have become very sick from this new flu and some have died. This **new flu is not prevented by the seasonal flu vaccine**, but a new vaccine has been developed. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the **new vaccine has been tested and found to be very safe** among all segments of the populations. It is **strongly recommended that youth, ages 6 months through age 24, receive the vaccine.**

The Knox County Health Department will be offering the 2009 H1N1 Influenza vaccine for all area youth in this age group. The Health Department has been working with school officials to offer clinics in your school district. The exact dates of those clinics will be announced soon.

Preliminary plans call for clinics **for young children including elementary students, to be held in the evening** with parents or guardians accompanying their children. **Clinics for middle school and high school students will be held during the day at school**, although these students are welcome to attend the evening clinics with parents if they prefer. **We expect the clinics to be held in the next few weeks.** Completed consent forms will help us know how much vaccine we will need for the clinics.

A signed consent form from a child's parent or guardian will be necessary for each child to receive the H1N1 vaccine. The vaccine will be available in the form of a shot or nasal spray. **Please note that receiving the vaccine is voluntary, not mandatory.**

In preparation for the school clinics, attached to this letter are:

- A **consent form** for your child to receive the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available;
- Two vaccine information statements (**VIS**) – one for the shot; one for the nasal spray;
- The Health Department's Notice of Privacy Practices commonly referred to as the **HIPAA** form (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).

The deadline to return the consent form to your child's school is Friday, Oct. 30.

For more information on H1N1, we urge you to check out the What's New page on our website at www.knoxhealth.com or visit the U.S. Health and Human Services website at www.flu.gov. If you have questions, please call our director of nursing, Jackie Fletcher, at 399-8003.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis G. Murray".

Dennis G. Murray
Health Commissioner