

**RICHMOND COUNTY
HEALTH DEPARTMENT**

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Visit our website at: publichealth.southernregionalahec.org/Richmond

Date: October 19, 2009

To: Parents/guardians

From: Dr. Tommy Jarrell
Richmond County Health Director

As you may have heard, a new influenza virus, called the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, was first identified in the United States in late April 2009. The virus has caused illness ranging from mild to severe, including hospitalizations and deaths. Many children have gotten 2009 H1N1 infection and there have been large outbreaks in some schools across the country. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) 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 the vaccine is available.

Vaccination is the best way to protect your child from this potentially serious disease. The Richmond County Health Department is working with your child's school to give the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine. The nurses of the Richmond County Health Department and Richmond County Schools will be offering a school-site immunization clinic at your child's school whereby your child can receive the vaccine during the school day. We are planning to hold vaccination clinics in the upcoming weeks, and your child's school will let you know the specific dates once vaccine is on hand.

We are including a consent form with this letter that will include options allowing you to either accept or refuse the vaccination for your child. We are also including an informational sheet on H1N1 influenza.

Children age 9 years and under will need two doses of the vaccine spaced about 4 weeks apart. There will be no cost to you for this vaccine, however we ask that if your child has insurance or Medicaid that you provide his/her insurance or Medicaid information so that we can bill for an administration fee.

If you would like for your child to receive the vaccine through the school-site immunization clinic, please complete **all** sections of the attached permission form and return it to your child's school **NO LATER than 10/26/2009**.

Please note that there are 3 places that you must sign on the permission form. These areas are marked with an arrow for your convenience. Failure to sign in ALL 3 places will result in your child NOT receiving the vaccine. If you do not want your child to receive the vaccine there is only one area for you to sign. If you refuse, the vaccination will not be given to your child.

Also, please be sure to complete the questions on the back side of the permission form as these questions **MUST** be answered before we can administer the vaccine to your child.

If you have any questions about the vaccine or the vaccination clinics, please contact your child's school nurse. You may also contact Rachel Lampley, RN, or Vivian Jenkins, RN at (910) 997-8300.

Please visit the CDC's 2009 H1N1 influenza web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> and also <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents> for information especially for parents. Your child's health care provider can also answer your questions about the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus and may be able to give your child the 2009 H1N1 vaccine.