



New York State
Office of
Children &
Family
Services

October 14, 2009

Dear Provider:

As New York State prepares for the second wave of the H1N1 influenza virus, the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) would like to share some key information on prevention, mitigation, and planning strategies to help you address the health and safety concerns of your staff and the children you care for.

David A. Paterson
Governor

Gladys Carrión, Esq.
Commissioner

Although most cases of H1N1 have been mild, no one can predict the impact of future outbreaks. Under the leadership of Governor Paterson and NYSDOH Commissioner Daines, OCFS have been working with our partners on the local, state and federal level to take steps both to reduce the spread and severity of illness, as well as minimize the disruptive effects of H1N1 and seasonal flu.

Capital View Office Park

52 Washington Street
Rensselaer, NY
12144-2796

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued guidance specifically targeted to child care providers to prepare and respond to the 2009-10 flu season. Because of your important role in caring for children and families, OCFS urges you to review these guidelines as well as the other resources issued from the New York State Department of Health (DOH) listed below.

CDC Guidance on helping child care and early childhood programs respond to the Influenza

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/childcare/guidance.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/childcare/>

OCFS would like to emphasize the importance of precautionary measures listed in the guidance through the following steps that everyone can take to be prepared:

- **Stay Informed:** Please visit the following websites listed on this page regularly. Web pages are updated frequently as information changes.
<http://www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/influenza/h1n1>
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>
<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/default.asp>
- **Practice good health hygiene etiquette:**
 - Encourage frequent hand washing with soap and warm water or when soap and water is unavailable use a hand sanitizer. (Hand sanitizer should be stored out of reach of very young children).
 - Use tissues when you cough, sneeze or cough and sneeze into your elbow/upper sleeve.
 - Keep your hands away from your face. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth



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- **Perform routine environmental cleaning with particular focus on items more likely to have frequent contact with hands, mouths and bodily fluids of young children.**
- **Get Vaccinated:** DOH recommends that everyone receive both the seasonal and H1N1 flu shots, especially those in high risk groups. The CDC has targeted the following groups for vaccination against the H1N1 flu when the vaccine becomes available this fall.
 - Pregnant women
 - Individuals who live with or care for babies younger than six-months-old
 - Children/young adults age six months through 24-years-old
 - People 25 through 64 years-old who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for complications from the flu.
 - Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel

For information on H1N1 Flu Vaccination please contact your Local County Health Departments

http://www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/influenza/vaccination_clinics/ or your health care provider.

- **Care for yourself and for those who have the flu:** Children and caregivers with flu-like symptoms should stay home until they are fever-free for 24 hours and should limit contact with others to avoid infecting others.

Communications Toolkit for Childcare and Early Childcare Programs

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/childcare/toolkit/pdf/childcare_toolkit.pdf

Information for school and childcare providers

http://www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/influenza/h1n1/schools_and_child_care_providers/

Thank you for your support in promoting a safe environment for the children and families of New York.

If you have further questions or concerns, you can call the H1N1 24 hour hotline at **1-800-808-1987**, your local or county health department or your OCFS regional office.

Sincerely,

/S/ Gladys Carrión

Gladys Carrión, Esq.
Commissioner