



Department of Health

Three Capitol Hill
Providence, RI 02908-5097

TTY: 711
www.health.ri.gov

October 28, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you probably know by now, the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) will begin vaccinating students against H1N1 in school-based clinics on November 2. As the date of the vaccination clinic at your child's school approaches, HEALTH has some important reminders.

Consent forms are mandatory

Without a signed and dated H1N1 vaccination consent form, a child cannot be vaccinated in school. Consent forms should be returned to the school that your child attends, not to HEALTH. Parents are urged to return consent forms as soon as possible. Returning consent forms in advance of scheduled clinic dates will help the Department of Health plan for how much vaccine to bring onsite to each clinic. Parents and guardians who don't already have copies of consent forms can find them in English and Spanish on HEALTH's website (<http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/schoolh1n1clinics/>).

Children will only be vaccinated in their own schools

Children can only be vaccinated in the schools that they attend. Children cannot be vaccinated in their siblings' schools if they do not also attend these schools. Children who are absent from school on the day that vaccines are given will not be vaccinated in the school-based vaccination program. These children will have to wait to receive the vaccine when it becomes available in their providers' offices. Children who have a fever on their scheduled vaccination day should stay home and get a flu vaccination at a later date from their healthcare providers.

Clinic schedule subject to change

Clinics were randomly scheduled in schools for the vaccination program's 28 days, but these dates may change based on vaccine availability or weather-related cancellations. Your child's school will notify you if its scheduled clinic date changes. You can also regularly check the vaccination clinic schedule on HEALTH's website (<http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/schoolh1n1clinics/>).

Kindergartners in private or independent programs will be vaccinated in their providers' offices

Because vaccine will not be available in private or independent kindergartens in preschool and/or daycare settings, kindergartners attending these schools should receive the H1N1 vaccine from their pediatricians or family physicians. Kindergartners in public, private, and parochial elementary schools will have the opportunity to be vaccinated through the school-based vaccination program.

Frequently Asked Questions available on HEALTH's website

HEALTH has prepared responses to many frequently asked questions regarding the school-based vaccination clinics. These responses can be found on HEALTH's website. If you have any additional questions, visit www.health.ri.gov/flu or call HEALTH's H1N1 Information Line at (401) 222-8022. Our staff are prepared to answer questions in English and Spanish.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Gifford".

David Gifford, MD
Director, Rhode Island Department of Health