

December 16, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The potentially dangerous H1N1 flu (sometimes called the “swine flu”) continues to affect school-aged children throughout Rhode Island. Although the Charlestown Regional School District has already hosted H1N1 vaccination clinics, children who did not receive vaccine can still do so. **H1N1 vaccine is now available in pediatricians’ and family physicians’ offices throughout Rhode Island for children who missed their school’s vaccination clinic.**

When thinking about vaccinating your child, please remember these important facts:

- **By having your school-age child vaccinated, you are helping to keep your entire family safe this season.** A child who has been vaccinated against H1N1 flu is much less likely to catch the illness and give it to siblings and other family members who have not yet received the vaccine.
- **The vaccine is safe.** The H1N1 vaccine was produced by the same manufacturers who make the seasonal flu vaccine that millions of Americans receive every year. These manufacturers spent the same amount of time making the H1N1 vaccine as they do making seasonal flu vaccines.
- **Those who have experienced symptoms of the flu this season should still be vaccinated against the H1N1 flu.** Many of the people who had flu-like illnesses this year had other viruses, not the H1N1 flu. Even if a child had the H1N1 flu already, getting the H1N1 vaccine is safe.

This vaccine is available in pediatricians’ and family physicians’ offices for children who did not receive their first doses of H1N1 vaccine. Second doses of H1N1 vaccine will be offered to children who are younger than 10 years of age in late January or early February in additional school-based clinics. More information about these clinics will be released in the coming weeks. Children who are 10 years of age and older do not need second doses of H1N1 vaccine.

If you have questions about H1N1 influenza or about the H1N1 vaccine, you can consult the website of the Rhode Island Department of Health (www.health.ri.gov) or contact the Department’s H1N1 Information line (401-222-8022).

We thank you for your continued cooperation during this challenging flu season.

Sincerely,

Barry J. Ricci
Superintendent of Schools