

To: Parents of Home-Schooled Children

From: Wendy Davis, MD, Commissioner of Health
Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner of Education

Re: October 5, 2009

Date: H1N1 Vaccinations in Schools

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) has recommended that children 6 months through 24 years of age, in addition to other groups of people, be vaccinated against the new H1N1 influenza virus (also referred to as swine flu) as soon as a vaccine is available. As you may have heard, this new influenza virus has caused illness ranging from mild to severe and has caused both adults and children to be hospitalized. Because children do not have immunity to this virus, they have been most affected by it and are considered at high risk of infection.

Vaccination is the best way to protect your child from this potentially serious disease. Please remember that vaccination for this or any flu is voluntary, not mandatory. Children under 10 years old will need two doses of vaccine, spaced four weeks apart. All others will need only one dose. Enclosed you will find a *Vaccine Information Statement*.

If you are interested in having your child/children vaccinated with the new H1N1 vaccine, you have several choices:

1. The Vermont Department of Health, in collaboration with the Vermont Department of Education, is working with schools around the state to offer the new H1N1 influenza vaccine to students at school free of charge. Check with the school(s) in your school district to see if H1N1 vaccination will be offered. If so, your child is eligible to receive a vaccine there.
2. Many healthcare providers have agreed to offer the H1N1 vaccine to their patients. If you would like to have your child vaccinated by his or her regular provider, please contact your provider's office to check if the vaccine will be offered there.
3. Community H1N1 vaccination clinics will be offered in locations throughout the state. Once scheduled, you will be able to locate clinics in your community by dialing 2-1-1, or by visiting the Health Department's Flu Clinic Finder website at www.healthvermont.gov/prevent/flu

If you have any questions about the vaccine, please call your child's healthcare provider or school nurse. For more information just for parents, visit the CDC's H1N1 flu web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents/>.