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Promoting and protecting the health of the public and the environment

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October 12, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Vaccination is the best way to protect your child from the flu. This year the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that school-aged children get vaccinations for seasonal flu and the novel H1N1 flu (swine flu). Flu vaccinations are not required for school attendance, but they are recommended to keep your child from getting sick with the flu.

DHEC is offering the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine (shots) at your child's school. We hope that offering the vaccine at school will make it easier for you to get your child vaccinated. There is no charge. **We will not vaccinate your child unless you give us written consent.**

- Please read the Vaccine Information Statement (attached) about the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine.
- Fill out the Parental Consent form to let us know if you want your child vaccinated at school. If you want your child to get the vaccine at school, there are health questions that you need to answer to help us decide if your child is able to get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine (shot).
- Have your child return the Parental Consent form to the school by the date requested. Please return the consent even if you do not want your child to be vaccinated at school.
- Keep the Vaccine Information Statement about the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine in case you want to read it again later.

The vaccine that will be administered in the schools has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as safe. The vaccine is available as an injection (a shot) or a nasal spray. The vaccine that will be used at your child's school is the vaccine which is given as a shot. The nasal spray will not be offered at school. If you want your child to receive the nasal spray, please talk with your child's primary healthcare provider.

If your child gets the novel H1N1 flu shot at school, we will send an immunization card home with your child for your records. If your child is less than 10 years of age he/she will need a second shot at least 21 days after the first shot. If your child is in an age range that requires a second shot, DHEC will provide information about getting the second dose. If you consent to your child being vaccinated at school, but your child is unwilling to be vaccinated at the school clinic, we will not vaccinate him/her.

If you have questions about the flu or the flu vaccine, call your child's primary healthcare provider or the DHEC Flu Hotline at 1-800-27-SHOTS. There is also information about flu on the DHEC web site at www.scdhec.gov/flu/swine-flu.htm.

Together, let's keep our children healthy and ready to learn.

Sincerely,

Lisa Waddell, M.D., M.P.H.

Deputy Commissioner for Health Services