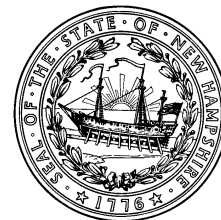


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DHHS Announces Pilot Project of School-Based Flu Vaccination Clinics *Clinics To Be Held In 6 Public Health Regions*

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Division of Public Health Services (DPHS) is announcing the start of school-based flu vaccination clinics, a new initiative aimed at vaccinating at least 50% of New Hampshire’s school-aged children. The clinics are part of a pilot project; six public health regions are voluntarily participating. There are about 100 schools that will be holding clinics in the coming months in Belknap, Coos, and Grafton Counties as well as the Greater Manchester area.

“We encourage parents in the participating districts to have their children vaccinated at their school,” said Public Health Director Dr. José Montero, “as vaccination is the single best protection against the flu. We know if our children are vaccinated, that will prevent the spread of this serious illness to their siblings, parents, and grandparents. When school-based clinics are successful, healthy children will stay in school, and decrease the amount of lost work time for parents. It will also mean that medical providers can focus on vaccinating people with complex medical issues and on caring for those who are ill.”

“Studies have shown that absentee rates for flu-like illnesses were much lower among children in the schools with an on-site vaccination program,” said New Hampshire’s Immunization Program (NHIP) Manager Marcella Bobinsky. “We have had excellent participation and cooperation from school administrators and school personnel. We thank everyone for their willingness to be involved in this pilot project.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Protection (CDC) has expanded recommendations this year for everyone over the age of 6 months to receive a seasonal influenza vaccine. This year’s seasonal flu vaccine will protect against three strains of the flu, including last year’s H1N1 virus. NHIP is providing the influenza vaccine. The administration of the vaccine will be paid for by the child’s insurance provider or by a special contract arranged by NHIP. This pilot project is designed to offer vaccine to all registered students in participating districts. It is not meant to include younger siblings, parents, or staff.

Influenza can be a very serious disease of the lungs, nose, and throat. The illness is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. Typical flu symptoms include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches.

(more)

For more information on influenza and the vaccine, contact the NH Immunization Program at 800-852-3345 ext. 4482 or 603-271-4482 or the Communicable Disease Surveillance Section at 800-852-3345 ext. 0279 or 603-271-0279. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov for more information or the DHHS website at www.dhhs.nh.gov.

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