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## **NEWS Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **LEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT & SCHOOL DISTRICT PREPARE FOR H1N1 (SWINE FLU) AS SCHOOL YEAR IS ABOUT TO BEGIN**

**Ft. Myers, FL** - As schools across the country begin the 2009/10 school year, Lee County Public Schools joins them in making preparation for what health officials say will be the next wave of H1N1 (Swine) Flu cases.

“Protecting the health of children in school requires a three way partnership. For the efforts of the School District and the health department will be successful we ask parents to join us in promoting good health habits. Most importantly we ask parents to keep their children home from school if they become ill.” said Dr. Judith A. Hartner, M.D., M.P.H., M.P.A., Director of the Lee County Health Department.

The District has had a pandemic plan in place for the past few years, and it was put into practice this past May when a Spring Creek Elementary student was one of the first confirmed cases of H1N1 (swine flu) in Lee County.

“All of our planning and preparation paid off in a big way,” said Dr. James Browder Superintendent of Schools. “You hope you never have to implement such a plan, but if you do, it better be 100 percent – and ours was. It worked perfectly, and my thanks go to my staff and the staff at the Health Department for a job well done.”

The District has the following steps in place to address H1N1 (Swine) Flu concerns during the 2009/10 school year (these will be provided to all families after the start of school:)

**- MORE -**



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- ▲ Increased vigilance by school staff to identify students exhibiting flu-like symptoms;
- ▲ Custodians/building supervisors to increase focus and frequency of cleaning commonly touched areas (i.e. doorknobs, light switches, handrails, etc.)
- ▲ Symptomatic students will be sent to the school's clinic for evaluation by a Clinic Assistant and/or School Nurse;
- ▲ Clinic Assistant and/or School Nurse will determine if a child should be isolated due to symptoms;
  - Schools will identify an area where students can be isolated from general student body;
- ▲ Parent/guardians of isolated students will be contacted and requested to pick up their child(ren) as soon as possible;
- ▲ Students with influenza-like illness **must remain at home for at least 24 hours** after their fever is gone (without the use of fever-reducing medicine such as Tylenol);
  - A fever is a temperature which is elevated above 100 degrees;
- ▲ If symptoms do not subside, parents should seek medical care from their doctor or health care provider;
- ▲ Students will be allowed to use hand sanitizers at school **under the supervision of adults**;
- ▲ Lee County Health Department and School District officials will continue to work closely together monitoring and evaluating the situation and determine if any additional steps/action is warranted.

In addition, Health Department and District officials want to stress what everyone can do to help minimize the affect the anticipated wave of H1N1 cases will have on our community:

- ▲ If you or your child(ren) are sick, **please stay home** for at least 24 hours after symptoms (including fever) subside;
- ▲ If symptoms continue, see a health care provider;
- ▲ **Cover Your Cough:** you should cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend in your elbow to avoid contaminating your hands;
- ▲ **Wash Your Hands:** Vigorous hand washing with soap and water is recommended; however, if soap and water are not available, use an approved hand sanitizer.