

WESTHILL CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CAROL A. ILACQUA, Ed.D.
*Assistant Superintendent for
Instructional Services*
Phone (315) 426-3215

STEPHEN A. BOCCIALATT
Superintendent of Schools
400 Walberta Road
Syracuse, New York 13219-2214
Phone (315) 426-3218
Fax (315) 488-6411

MARILEE P. HILL
*Assistant Superintendent for
Business Administration*
Phone (315) 426-3210

November 3, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you know, a new influenza virus, called the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus is widespread in the United States, causing outbreaks of illness in many schools across the country. For most people, illness caused by this virus is no worse than that caused by seasonal flu. Unfortunately, some people can become very ill with H1N1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that children and young adults aged 6 months through 24 years be vaccinated against 2009 H1N1 as soon as the vaccine is available. The best way to protect your child from getting influenza is to have your child vaccinated.

The Onondaga County Health Department will be offering free H1N1 vaccination to all children **enrolled** in school districts in Onondaga County. The clinics will be held at a district level (not in individual schools). In order to meet the needs of all of Onondaga County, some districts will share a clinic. Westhill will share a clinic with the Solvay and Lyncourt school districts. Please note that children may only get vaccinated at their district's vaccination clinic. The date of your child's school district program is **tentatively** scheduled for **Thursday, November 19th from 4:00 – 9:00 pm at Westhill High School**, 4501 Onondaga Boulevard, Syracuse, 13219. **In the event that the vaccine is not available for November 19th, the clinic will be held on Monday, November 30th from 4:00 – 9:00 pm at Solvay High School**, 600 Gertrude Avenue, Solvay, 13209. Please check our website at www.westhillschools.org to confirm vaccine availability for the November 19th clinic.

If you would like to have your child receive the H1N1 vaccine, **register your child** in advance for the H1N1 vaccine. You can register on the school's website or through the Health Department's flu hotline at 435-5752 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. If the clinic date changes because of lack of available vaccine, you will not need to re-register your child for the alternate date. The best way for the Health Department to provide an efficiently run clinic is to have a good estimate of the number of children attending the clinic. Every attempt will be made to offer both the inactivated vaccine (flu shot) as well as the live attenuated vaccine (nasal spray) at the clinic **however, the Health Department cannot guarantee either choice**. Plan to accompany your child to the clinic because a signed parental consent form is required prior to getting the vaccine. If you plan to have someone else bring your child to the vaccination clinic, you can obtain a consent form ahead of time at the school office.

Please note that the Onondaga County Health Department and the school district are working together to ensure the vaccination process is as streamlined and efficient as possible. Despite all of our planning efforts, we anticipate that there may be a significant wait at the clinic. Please arrive at your scheduled time. If you bring your child earlier than the scheduled time, you will have to wait even longer. Please do not bring younger siblings that are not enrolled in school to these clinics. Finally, consider bringing reading material and snacks with you to the clinic.

Children under the age of 10 are recommended to have two doses of vaccine spaced about 4 weeks apart. We are asking that you follow up with your child's primary care provider to schedule your child for the second dose.

If you have any questions about the vaccine or the vaccination clinics. Please visit the CDC's 2009 H1N1 influenza web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents> for information especially for parents. Your child's health care provider also can answer your questions about the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Boccialatt
Superintendent of Schools

"Westhill . . . Where Educational Excellence is a Tradition"
www.westhillschools.org

- In mid to late November, the Onondaga County Health Department will begin holding district-wide 2009 H1N1 vaccination clinics if vaccine is widely available
- *Clinics will be open only to children enrolled in school*
- Register your child on your school's website or by calling the flu hotline
- Come at your scheduled time
- Be prepared to wait- consider bringing books, games, snacks to the clinic
- Do NOT bring your child if he/she has any symptoms of flu-like illness
- Please have an alternate care plan for younger siblings

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Syracuse, NY 13219-2297

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