



Sweet Home Central School District of Amherst and Tonawanda

Office of the Superintendent
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Geoffrey M. Hicks
Superintendent of Schools

October 13, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that certain groups receive the 2009 H1N1 influenza (flu) vaccine when it first becomes available. These target groups include:

- Pregnant women
- Persons who live with or provide care for infants less than 6 months old
- Health-care and emergency medical services personnel
- Persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old
- Persons between the ages of 25 and 64 years old who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications including people who have cancer, blood disorders (including sickle cell disease), chronic lung disease [including asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)], diabetes, heart disease (except hypertension), kidney disorders, liver disorders, neurological disorders (including nervous system, brain or spinal cord).

According to the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH), the best place for your child to receive vaccination for H1N1 **will be** from his/her Health Care Provider. The ECDOH is encouraging and supporting ALL Health Care Providers to administer H1N1 vaccine to their patients in the above initial target groups. Health Care Providers can receive H1N1 vaccine at no cost simply by registering with the NYS Department of Health at <https://hctesteamwork1.health.state.ny.us/pub/toph1n1.html>.

The ECDOH will do everything possible to ensure that H1N1 vaccine is preferentially shipped to those Health Care Providers who have registered as above as soon as it becomes available. **However, it is important to note that your child's Health Care Provider will likely not have H1N1 vaccine until at least mid to late October.** We encourage you to begin to educate yourself now though by visiting the web links below and by talking to your child's Health Care Provider.

The ECDOH recognizes that some children may be unable to receive H1N1 vaccine from their Health Care Provider. Therefore, the Sweet Home Central School District is partnering with the ECDOH and Town of Amherst Department of Emergency Services and Safety to provide access to vaccination for children who attend public, charter, non-public, and parochial schools in the Sweet Home Central School District **AND who are unable to get vaccinated against H1N1 by their Health Care Provider.** Dates and locations will be announced when this information is available. Please check the Sweet Home website or www.erie.gov/health often for the most current information.

The CDC has also recommended that all children over the age of 6 months receive the seasonal flu vaccine. While the best place to receive seasonal flu vaccination is also from your child's Health Care Provider, it is important to note that many Health Care Providers have not received their entire order of seasonal flu vaccine yet. Therefore, we suggest you continue to check back with them as the CDC has assured us that there will be plenty of seasonal flu vaccine eventually. A listing of other sites in the community where individuals age 9 and older could receive seasonal flu vaccine can be found at www.erie.gov/immunizewny or by calling the local agency flu shot hotlines listed below.

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| • Visiting Nurses Association | 716-630-8330 |
| • Maxim Health Systems | 877-962-9358 |
| • Independent Nursing Care | 716-805-1020 |

You can find much more information about both seasonal and H1N1 influenza and vaccines at:

- Sweet Home Central School District (www.sweethomeschools.com)
- ECDOH (www.erie.gov/health/swine_flu.asp)
- NYSDOH (www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/influenza/h1n1/)
- CDC (www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)
- Flu.gov (www.flu.gov/)

We look forward to joining you in making this a healthy school year for your family and our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoffrey M. Hicks".

Geoffrey M. Hicks
Superintendent of Schools