Severity of Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Illness Declines

Marshalltown School District to resume classes

Given new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), all Marshalltown School District schools will reopen Thursday, May 7, 2009. This decision was made by the Marshalltown School District after consultation with the Iowa Dept. of Public Health (IDPH), Iowa Department of Education, and Marshall County public health.

Recognizing the unknown nature of novel influenza A (H1N1), public health officials in the U.S. acted with great caution to protect against the widespread illness and death seen in Mexico. This resulted in schools across the nation, including the Marshalltown School District, voluntarily closing when several students were identified as probable influenza A (H1N1) cases. Today, with more information about the severity of illness being reported in the U.S. and new guidance from the CDC, public health officials believe it is safe to reopen the Marshalltown schools, with the following precautions:

- Students, faculty or staff with influenza-like illness (ILI) should stay home and not attend school or go into the community except to seek medical care for at least seven days, even if symptoms resolve sooner. If illness continues greater than seven days they should stay home until 24 hours after symptoms have resolved.

- Students, faculty and staff who appear to have an ILI at arrival or become ill during the school day should be isolated promptly in a room separate from other students and sent home.

- Parents and guardians should monitor their school-aged children, and faculty and staff should self-monitor every morning for symptoms of ILI
• Ill students should not attend alternative child care or congregate in settings other than school.

• School administrators should communicate regularly with local public health officials to obtain guidance about reporting of ILI in schools.

• Students, faculty and staff should cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or coughing or sneezing into their sleeve if a tissue is not available), frequently wash hands with soap and water, or use a hand sanitizer if hand washing with soap and water is not possible.

For more information about influenza A (H1N1), visit http://www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/swine_flu.asp. A public hotline for questions about this unique strain of influenza is also available at 1-800-447-1985.

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