

**Communicable Disease Epidemiology
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Public Health 
Seattle & King County

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FROM: Jeff Duchin, MD, Chief, Communicable Disease Epidemiology & Immunization Section; Betsy Hubbard, RN, Immunization Practice Manager

TO: King County School Administrators, Heads of Schools, School Nurses, and Parent-Teacher Association Leadership

RE: **Influenza vaccine is now recommended for everyone aged 6 months and older for the 2010-11 influenza season**

Interested in keeping students and staff healthy during the coming influenza season? The key messages and resources included in this e-mail and attached documents will hopefully assist you in your efforts to do just that! The information can be sent in electronic format to students, parents and staff on an e-mail list, or you can send home hard copies of all or parts of the messages. We have posted the electronic versions of all the documents mentioned in this letter on our website at www.kingcounty.gov/health/flu.

Why is influenza information important for schools?

- Approximately 1 out of every 5 individuals in the U.S. attends or works in schools.
- Influenza is a preventable cause of missed school days, avoidable medical visits, and unnecessary antibiotic treatment among both students and school staff.
- Influenza can result in serious illness, including hospitalization and death, particularly among persons with underlying medical conditions, pregnant women, and infants.
- Influenza spreads particularly well among school age children and in the school environment.

Influenza vaccination is an important part of preventing influenza. In 2010, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) expanded **recommendations for influenza vaccine to include everyone aged 6 months and older**. We have included a copy of “**Children, the Flu, and Flu Vaccine**”, adapted from materials at www.cdc.gov/flu.

This year, there will be plenty of influenza vaccine available in a variety of settings—health care provider practices, community and Public Health clinics, pharmacies, and work locations—and it will be available earlier than in many previous seasons. We want to be sure that everyone who wants to get vaccinated knows where to get vaccine, especially those in groups at highest risk for complications if they get influenza. We are including a list of commercial vaccinators that can conduct influenza vaccine clinics at your school for students, parents, staff, and faculty. Two of these vaccinators will bill Medicaid, which we know has been an issue for many schools.

CDC's website has other materials which you might find helpful to families, including:

- **“Stopping Germs at Work, Home, and School”**, a fact sheet that describes preventive measures such as covering your cough, washing your hands, and staying home when you are sick. This fact sheet can be downloaded in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog from www.cdc.gov/germstopper/materials/home_work_school.pdf.
- **“Key Facts About Seasonal Flu Vaccine”**, available in English at www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm.

If you have questions about influenza disease or vaccine, please contact Public Health at 206-296-4774 or visit our website at www.kingcounty.gov/health/flu.

Enclosures:

- “Children, the Flu, and Flu Vaccine”
- Commercial Vaccinators that can conduct influenza vaccination clinics at schools