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**Update on Novel H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu) and  
Voluntary Vaccinations**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 1, 2009

Bernards Township (September 1, 2009)

With the new school year beginning, public health officials continue to see seasonal flu and expect more cases of the novel H1N1 flu (swine flu) as it circulates world wide. It is anticipated that when a safe and effective vaccine is developed, New Jersey can expect to receive its allotment in late October or early November. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will then make the vaccine available through health care and public health providers in a variety of venues such as private medical practices and federally qualified health centers. The novel H1N1 vaccination will be strictly voluntary. In order to be effective, the vaccine requires a booster some weeks after the initial vaccination.

Although no individual will be required to be vaccinated against H1N1 Influenza, certain groups will be given priority to receive the vaccine. Consistent with the CDC guidance, the first to be vaccinated will be those most susceptible to H1N1 Influenza and those individuals expected to be in direct contact with H1N1, and those who could infect young infants. The groups recommended to receive novel H1N1 influenza vaccine include:

- Pregnant women
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age,
- health care and emergency service personnel,
- all people from 6 months through 24 years of age, and
- persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.

The CDC does not expect that there will be a shortage of the novel H1N1 vaccine, but flu availability and demand can be unpredictable and it is possible that initially vaccine will be shipped in limited quantities. The priority in which the vaccine will be distributed to the public will be based on its availability.

Besides vaccine, there are effective methods of prevention that minimize risk of illness such as:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are spread that way.
- Stay home if you get sick. CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Don't get on an airplane if you are sick.

“We will need all parents to cooperate this fall. If your child has influenza-like illness which includes fever, cough, and or sore throat please keep your child at home and report the absence to your school.” said Health Officer, Lucy A. Forgione. Based on the current CDC guidance children with influenza-like illness must remain at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever, without the use of fever- reducing drugs. Keeping children with fever at home will reduce the number of people who may get infected. Parents should plan to keep a sick child at home for 3 to 5 days if they have flu symptoms. The new CDC guidance does not recommend school closings and all efforts will be made to keep schools open and functioning in a normal manner.

For further information, go to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [www.cdc.gov/swineflu](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu) or <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/statelocal/>  
Contact the Bernards Township Health Department at **908-204-2520**  
[www.bernardshealth.org/flu](http://www.bernardshealth.org/flu) or check for updates on the Morris County Office of Health Management website, [www.morris.health.org](http://www.morris.health.org) or on the NJSDHSS [www.state.nj.us/health](http://www.state.nj.us/health)

The Bernards Township Health Department is a Contractual Health Agency for Bernards Township, Bernardsville Borough, Chester Borough, Mendham Borough, Mendham Township, Long Hill Township and Peapack & Gladstone Borough

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