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August 7, 2009

Dear Parents:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that children 6 months through 18 years of age in addition to other groups of people, be vaccinated against the new H1N1 ("swine flu") influenza virus as soon as a vaccine becomes available. As you may have heard, this new influenza virus has caused illness ranging from mild to severe and has caused hospitalizations in both adults and children. Because children do not have immunity to this virus, they have been most affected by it and are considered at high risk of infection. As the U.S. begins its fall and winter flu season, the CDC is concerned that this virus may cause more illness, which may be severe in some cases. Vaccination is the best way to protect your child from this potentially serious disease.

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department is working with your child's school to offer the new H1N1 influenza vaccine to children at school. We will hold vaccination clinics beginning this fall and your child's school will provide specific dates once vaccine is obtained. School officials will send you an informational packet which will likely be sent home with your child. This packet will contain information sheets about the disease and the vaccine as well as a form that you must sign to accept or refuse vaccination for your child. Vaccine will not be given to your child without your written consent.

Children are expected to need two vaccines spaced 3 weeks or more apart. There is no cost to you for this vaccine if delivered through a school site.

If you have any questions about the vaccine or the clinics, please call this number: 419-213-4114 from 8:00 AM to 4:45 PM. Please visit the CDC's novel H1N1 influenza web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents/> for special information for parents. Additionally, your child's health care provider can answer your questions about the new H1N1 virus, and the need for your child to also be vaccinated against the seasonal influenza virus.

Sincerely,

David Grossman, M.D.
Health Commissioner

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The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department operates in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
Visit us on the web at: www.co.lucas.oh.us/health