

Richard Whitley, M.S.
Administrator

Mary Guinan, M.D., PhD
State Health Officer



Contact Name: Martha Framsted, PIO
Phone Number: 775.684.4014
Release Date: May 4, 2009
Page 1 of 2

NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION NEWS RELEASE

Nevada State Health Division Releases Interim Guidelines on School and Childcare Facility Closure

Carson City –Today, the Nevada State Health Division released Nevada guidance on school and childcare facility closure in response to human infections with 2009 influenza A (H1N1) virus. The guidance has been developed by the Joint Health and Education Authorities Influenza Oversight Committee. The committee consists of the State Health Officer, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, local health officers and local school superintendent and private school/childcare facility operators.

State Health Officer, Dr. Mary Guinan said, “We developed the guidance based upon what is currently happening in our state, using the interim guidance that we have received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As the situation evolves, the guidance may change.”

The one confirmed case of H1N1 influenza in Nevada was detected in a child who attended a childcare facility. Inevitably, additional cases of H1N1 influenza will likely be confirmed in a Nevada school or another childcare facility. When this happens, a decision must be made about facility closure, both at the school/childcare facility of the infected child and possibly other schools/childcare facilities in the area. A confirmed or probable case in a student will not automatically merit a recommendation to close schools. Closing a school or childcare facility is a step not to be taken lightly and all implications of this action must be considered before a decision is made. This is especially true because potential benefits from the strategy of school closure to control an influenza outbreak are unproven. Furthermore, based on evidence in recent reports, it appears the H1N1 virus is similar to seasonal influenza viruses for which school closures are not routinely recommended.

Upon notification of a confirmed or probable case the Joint Health and Education Authorities Influenza Oversight Committee will make the decision on school closure or other remediation efforts.

(MORE)



Richard Whitley, Administrator

4150 Technology Way, Suite 300 Carson City, Nevada 89706
Phone (775) 684-4200, Fax (775) 684-4211
NEVADA STATE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Evaluation Criteria

The Committee will consider the following criteria, including but not limited to:

- Severity of illness based on national surveillance and CDC recommendations
- Timing of the illness onset and when the student was in school
- Infectivity of the H1N1 virus based on national surveillance
- Extent of transmission including number, timing and location of cases
- Transportation issues related to exposure of children on school buses
- Social or economic issues
- Risks of recongregation if schools were closed
- Availability and feasibility of other community mitigation measures

Non-School Closure Mitigation Measures

In place of school closure, local school districts will identify and implement other appropriate mitigation measures in consultation with state and local health authorities, including but not limited to:

- Increased disease surveillance by the school nurse or other responsible person, ensuring that ill children do not attend school
- Increased hand washing, providing hand sanitizers (if possible), and other interventions normally used during seasonal influenza
- Increased communication with children, parents and school staff about disease prevention, including reminders to have children and school staff stay home if they are ill
- Siblings, other family members and close contacts who present to school or report signs or symptoms compatible with influenza-like illness will not be allowed to attend school until they recover from their illness or they return with a signed release from a health care provider

Length of School Closure

Current CDC guidelines that suggest that schools be closed for a period of up to 14 days are under review and likely to be changed. If a school is closed, the Committee will establish the length of the school closure based on the latest CDC guidelines and the specific circumstances of each case.

The entire guidance document will be posted on the Health Division's website: <http://health.nv.gov>

###

Richard Whitley, M.S.
Administrator

Mary Guinan, M.D., PhD
State Health Officer



Contact Name: Martha Framsted, PIO
Phone Number: 775.684.4014
Release Date: May 4, 2009
Page 1 of 2

NEVADA STATE HEALTH DIVISION NEWS RELEASE

For more information about the Nevada State Health Division, go to: <http://health.nv.gov>.

###



Richard Whitley, Administrator

4150 Technology Way, Suite 300 Carson City, Nevada 89706
Phone (775) 684-4200, Fax (775) 684-4211
NEVADA STATE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER