

Steven L. Beshear  
Governor



Kevin M. Noland  
Interim Commissioner of Education

**EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CABINET  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Capital Plaza Tower • 500 Mero Street • Frankfort, Kentucky 40601  
Phone: (502) 564-4770 • [www.education.ky.gov](http://www.education.ky.gov)

July 31, 2009

TO: All State Superintendents

Dear Superintendent:

With the reopening of schools, there is concern from the federal government that the H1N1 (swine flu) pandemic will intensify in the United States. While incidents of swine flu are being reported in smaller numbers since May, the virus is still active and is suspected of causing outbreaks this summer in camps and other venues at which large numbers of young people gather.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) emphasizes that there are important differences between the new virus and seasonal flu. The H1N1 virus takes its heaviest toll in children and young adults, while seasonal flu usually strikes the elderly hardest. Also, health officials are concerned that the virus may mutate and become more virulent as it spreads through the population. The anticipated course of the H1N1 is that it will come in perhaps three six- to eight-week waves, will impact 30 to 40 percent of the U.S. population and could result in long closures of schools and workplaces.

President Barack Obama is advancing plans for a government-funded vaccination campaign that will provide H1N1 flu shots free to the public. The first 100 million doses of the vaccine will not be available until mid-October, and eventually, as many as 600 million doses will be produced. There will be a separate vaccine for seasonal flu. The first H1N1 shots will be targeted to those at highest risk, including **school-age children**, young adults with underlying conditions such as asthma or diabetes, pregnant women and health-care workers.

Because doses must be distributed quickly, officials are asking state health departments to help find new ways to get them to people, including through **schools and day care centers**. Within the next few weeks, the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) will receive \$3.6 million to disperse to local health departments for supplies, training and staffing for the vaccination campaign. Another \$1.2 million will be distributed to Kentucky hospitals to help prepare for a surge in patients. The University of Louisville and University of Kentucky have received a \$2 million grant to help with community preparedness.

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and DPH are asking you to begin preparing for the pandemic and to be ready to adapt to changing circumstances. Schools will be involved in **surveillance** (providing data regarding the incidence of flu and flu-like symptoms among your students and faculty), **mitigation** (ranging from advising parents to closing schools), **vaccination** (working with the health department to get students vaccinated) and **communication** (early and frequent messages to parents, students, staff and the public).

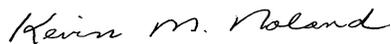
Your first step is to review your district's Pandemic Flu Plan. It must be current with appropriate actions for implementation. KDE and DPH will offer resources for planning, decision-making and action. Attached are a Planning Toolkit, a FAQ sheet and a sample letter to send to parents at the start of the school year. Information on data reporting will follow, as will other tools as they are developed.

Please view the latest H1N1 information on the KDE Web site at <http://www.education.ky.gov/kde/administrative+resources/school+health/health+services/>. See also the federal Web site [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov), which provides guidance for families and communities.

It is critical that you make early contact with your local health department directors and homeland security coordinators in your community. These officials can provide you with information to help you make decisions regarding the health and safety of your students and faculty.

If you have questions regarding school closure decisions, contact Michelle Sutton at [michelle.sutton@education.ky.gov](mailto:michelle.sutton@education.ky.gov) or (502) 564-3846. If you have health-related questions, contact Karen Erwin or Barbara Donica at [karen.erwin@education.ky.gov](mailto:karen.erwin@education.ky.gov) or [barbara.donica@education.ky.gov](mailto:barbara.donica@education.ky.gov) or (502) 564-5625. If you have questions about reporting data, contact Becky Jenkins at [becky.jenkins@education.ky.gov](mailto:becky.jenkins@education.ky.gov) or (502) 564-5279. If you have questions about communicating with the public, contact Lisa Gross at [lisa.gross@education.ky.gov](mailto:lisa.gross@education.ky.gov) or (502) 564-2015. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



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Kevin M. Noland, Interim Commissioner  
Kentucky Department of Education



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William D. Hacker, MD, Commissioner  
Kentucky Department of Education