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## State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Division of Early Care and Education

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October 20, 2009

## Letter for all licensed and certified child care providers in Wisconsin - 10/20/09

## Dear Child Care Provider:

An increasing number of school districts have been closing across Wisconsin due to a high rate of absenteeism among students with influenza-like-illness. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is sending you this letter as a reminder to be especially vigilant in not allowing children or staff who show signs of influenza-like-illness to be present in your centers.

Signs of seasonal flu or H1N1 flu (formerly know as swine flu) include:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- body aches
- headache
- chills, and
- fatigue

Some people (especially children) may also experience vomiting and diarrhea.

Please instruct parents to keep their children home when they are sick or have any flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever, or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. This directive also applies to your staff.

Encourage your staff to receive the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 flu vaccine when they are available in your area. It is important to receive both vaccines since one vaccine will <u>not</u> protect against both illnesses. The H1N1 influenza vaccine is produced in the same way that the seasonal flu vaccine is, and thus is expected to have the same very good safety track record. Since infants younger than sixmonths-old cannot receive flu vaccines, it is extremely important that individuals caring for this population receive the vaccines.

Other ways to stay healthy and to protect yourself and those around you from getting the flu include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or use your shirt sleeve or elbow if no tissue is available.)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Frequently wash common surfaces, such as table tops and door knobs.
- Stay away from people who are sick.
- Eat nutritious meals, get plenty of rest and do not smoke.

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Your cooperation can help to reduce the spread of the H1N1 virus. For additional information on the H1N1 flu you may call 2-1-1 or go to <a href="https://www.pandemic.wisconsin.gov">www.pandemic.wisconsin.gov</a>.

Thank you and be well,

Henry wood

Henry Wilde

Deputy Secretary