



Dear School Official,

This binder of information is designed to provide you with the practical tools you and your staff will need to prepare for a pandemic flu outbreak. At the present, there is no pandemic flu in the United States.

It is important to understand that every year, a large number of people get sick with seasonal flu; 36,000 people in the United States die from seasonal flu. This is the respiratory disease, not the gastrointestinal illness that is so common. Flu vaccines are effective ways to prevent people from getting sick with seasonal flu.

At some point, whether it is the H1N1 influenza virus or another influenza virus, health experts believe that there will be a new virus that spreads easily among people for which most people have no immunity and for which there is no vaccine. When that happens and people begin to get sick from the virus, we will have a pandemic flu.

There is a great deal of planning for an influenza pandemic underway at the federal, state and local level. The tools in this binder will help your school begin those efforts. They should also help your students' parents begin their own preparations at home.

As the months go by, we will be giving you additional information about:

- How schools might be used as a site for providing treatment or vaccination (sometimes called Point of Dispensing Sites for mass vaccination or prophylaxis). Most sites have already been determined.
- Plans that have been developed to care for those who are extremely ill when local hospital beds are full. (This is sometimes called surge capacity planning)

We hope you will work with us and help us educate the community about the importance of preparation. Please call us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jeff Kuhr Ph.D., Executive Director
Three Rivers District Health Department