

## SCHOOL ACTION STEPS FOR PANDEMIC FLU

The following is a chronological list of important step-by-step actions schools should take before, during and after a pandemic flu outbreak. Pandemic flu can have several cycles or waves so this list may need to be repeated.

### **PRIOR TO OUTBREAK/PREPAREDNESS & PLANNING PHASE**

- Create a pandemic flu plan. (Use the CDC School Pandemic Flu Planning Checklist and Flow Chart in this section of the binder)
- Work with Three Rivers District Health Department and emergency preparedness officials. They may want to use the schools as a way to disseminate information to families. You can begin with Parent Letter #1 in the Parent section of this binder and include the Disaster Preparedness Brochure (20 week checklist) and the Pandemic Influenza brochure.
- Decide the roles and responsibilities of school staff (including all ancillary staff) to prevent the spread of flu.
- Train nurses and staff in flu-symptom recognition. (See surveillance section of this binder). Remember that a person who is infected does not show symptoms right away. But children who are getting ill may exhibit behaviors that are not normal for them, such as eating less or being irritable.
- Insure that standard surveillance/disease recognition procedures are in place and implemented. (See surveillance section of this binder)
- Improve the hygiene of students and staff. Use simple non-medical ways to reduce the spread of flu by “cough and sneeze etiquette,” clean hands, and clean work areas. (See public information section of this binder for posters)
- Determine whether the school should be cleaned differently or more often.
- Decide to what extent you will encourage or require children and staff to stay home when they are mildly ill.
- Identify students who are most vulnerable to serious illness (immune compromised, chronic illness, etc.) Some students may have a greater risk of infections. Encourage those families to talk to their health care provider. Some parents may need to be more cautious in keeping their children out of school.
- Develop alternative learning strategies such as collaborative agreements with local cable stations, teleconferencing “distance learning”, or lessons on CDs.
- Educate staff, students and parents about: the differences between seasonal flu, bird flu and pandemic flu; best hygienic practices to prevent any sort of flu; what could occur in a pandemic. (Use the information in the public information section of this binder)

### **Outbreak of Flu Disease**

**LESS THAN 10% STUDENTS**

- Begin Heightened Surveillance Reporting
- Send out Parent Letter #3 Initial Outbreak, informing parents that some students are sick but schools remain open, include tip sheets and info resource list\*
- Work with Three Rivers District Health Department regarding a Press Release A announcing schools remain open but parents need to prepare/Use key messages A\*
- Post flu prevention signs on campus

### **Expansion of the Outbreak**

**10% OR MORE OF STUDENTS ILL (but less than 30%)**

- Epidemic Declaration letter
- Begin Intensive Surveillance Reporting
- Send Parent Letter #4 Expanded Outbreak; include prevention tip sheets, etc.

### **Continued Expansion of the Outbreak**

**MORE THAN 30% OF STUDENTS ILL**

- School Closing Declaration
- Work with Three Rivers District Health Department regarding a Press Release B announcing schools are closing /Use key messages B\*
- Close school
- Send out Parent Letter #5 School Closure, announcing closure(s)
- Cancel any non-academic events

### **Following the Outbreak**

- School Open Declaration press release
- Issue Parent Letter #6
- Continue communicating with Three Rivers District Health Department
- Return to heightened surveillance reporting

If students get sick again, start checklist again at Outbreak section.