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News media calls to David Hass at (630) 682-7979, ext. 7374.

## **Health officials tell DuPage County school leaders that good hygiene is key to reducing impact of flu**

### *Prevention tips and H1N1 strategies outlined for 250 schools*

Superintendents and school nurses from 42 school districts representing 250 schools and between 250,000 to 300,000 students in DuPage County heard recommendations and strategies for mass vaccinations to combat novel H1N1 flu from the DuPage County Health Department on Wednesday (Aug. 12) at the Medinah Shrine Center, Addison.

In a meeting organized by Dr. Darlene Ruscitti, Superintendent of the DuPage County Regional Office of Education, more than 100 school leaders heard plans about preparing for the fall.

Bob Schillerstrom, Chairman of the DuPage County Board, notes that the meeting was important in order to promote the use of healthy habits among school children, which will keep children and their family's safe during the flu season.

"We will continue to work with our county schools so that information on this important matter is shared well in advance of coming flu season," said Schillerstrom. "It is important for our residents to ensure they are taking the necessary precautions, such as hand washing and covering a cough, to stem the spread of the flu and to keep their loved ones safe."

Dr. Ruscitti stressed the importance of using preventative measures to keep schools open and the willingness of schools to communicate and work with both her regional office of education and the Health Department.

Maureen McHugh, Executive Director of the Health Department, said the health department has set up an electronic reporting system to monitor schools and their absentee rates. She said mass vaccination plans are also being discussed in the event that clinics are needed within schools. Issues such as volunteer helpers, additional nurses to do the vaccinations and communications within school communities were also outlined.

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