



Reach Each Child

Pulaski County Public Schools

202 N. Washington Avenue, Pulaski, Virginia 24301

Office of the Superintendent

MEMORANDUM

TO: Employees of Pulaski County Public Schools

FROM: Don Stowers

SUBJECT: Flu Information

DATE: April 29, 2009

On Monday, April 27, the New River Valley (NRV) superintendents and others participated in a telephone conference with Dr. Jody Hershey, Director, New River Valley Health District concerning the swine flu. Mary Hall and Dr. Tom Brewster participated with me. My goal for writing to you about this conversation is to provide you with information and resources. If you have questions, please talk with your principal or supervisor and/or nurse.

According to Dr. Hershey, the best information about the swine flu is found at www.cdc.gov/swineflu. The information is updated constantly. As of yesterday, there were 61 confirmed cases of influenza in five (5) states: Texas, California, Kansas, New York, and Ohio. The range of age of the patients was 20 - 40 years old (remember: many of the patients in New York were students on spring break in Mexico). According to Dr. Hershey, the influenza has been relatively mild for the patients.

The World Health Organization has not declared this a pandemic although the situation may warrant that status in the future. For your information, we have pandemic plans developed which we completed two years ago should we have a more widespread outbreak.

The flu presents itself as any other flu: fever, coughing, lack of appetite, runny nose, sore throat, and (sometimes) nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea. As with most flu, patients usually are contagious for a day or two before they show symptoms and then up to seven (7) days afterwards. Some individuals may be contagious longer than seven (7) days and should be considered so if symptoms persist.

On Tuesday, April 28th, superintendents received the following information from Dr. Pat Wright, Virginia's Superintendent for Public Instruction:

Swine flu is in the headlines and your schools may be receiving questions from parents regarding the schools' responses. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) continues to analyze the virus.

Public health caution is in order. This is the time for school division personnel to review their Pandemic Influenza Plan and make revisions as needed. Relationships between school division officials, local health department officials, and community leaders should already be in place. You should continue to monitor this fluid situation by accessing the latest information on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [swine flu page](#). The following resources are provided for your information:

- The Virginia Department of Education's *Pandemic Influenza Guidelines for Virginia Public Schools* may be found at the following website: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Health/home.html> under "Publications."
- The Virginia Department of Education's *Pandemic Influenza Planning for Schools: School Closure Strategies by Pandemic Phase* may be found at the following website: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Health/home.html> under "Publications."
- Current information from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) may be accessed at their Web site at: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/index.htm>. This Web site contains the April 24, 2009, VDH press release regarding Swine Flu, Center for Disease Control (CDC) fact sheets and other information along with flu prevention measures.
- CDC Fact Sheet: Questions & Answers on Swine Flu may be accessed at: http://cdc.gov/swineflu/swineflu_you.htm.

Virginia has a strong public health system and is well prepared to address the current situation. The Virginia Department of Health encourages anyone with influenza-like illness to follow these standard guidelines:

- If you get sick, stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- If you think you require medical attention, call your health care provider in advance so that they can take the necessary infection control precautions prior to your arrival.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.

This information has been shared with the school nurse coordinator in each school division.

Thank you for your help with this matter.

pc: Members, Pulaski County School Board