



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: School Nurse Supervisors
School Nurses
School Based Health Clinic Nurse Practitioners

FROM: Cheryl Resha, Education Manager
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

DATE: October 27, 2009

SUBJECT: Surgical Mask Distribution to School Districts

The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) has identified school nurses and school nurse practitioners as a priority group in the H1N1 Influenza pandemic and will be distributing one case of 500 surgical masks to each school district via FedEx or overnight mail on **Wednesday, October 28, 2009**. The surgical masks are **only** to be used for:

- Placement on children who come to school with or develop flu-like symptoms during the school day. The children should be placed in a monitored area, away from main congregate areas, that has limited access until taken home. Masks should not be issued to persons picking up ill children; and
- Staff who are assigned to the "clinic" or equivalent area and are responsible for monitoring ill children. It is also advisable that the number of personnel that perform these activities be restricted in number.

Masks are not recommended as a general prevention measure for healthy children and staff. The mask allocation can **only** be used as defined above and is intended to get you started as you explore resupply options in your districts. We recognize that school districts vary in size and therefore we are requesting that school nurse supervisors consider sharing the supply of surgical masks with neighboring community schools when necessary.

The DPH is also working on providing N95 masks (Kimberly Clark brand) to school nurses and school nurse practitioners. In preparation, school districts should be working with their medical advisors to develop a protocol on when to utilize N95 masks. To this end, DPH is recommending that school have in place written air bone protection policies using current Federal OSHA Safety Standards found in 29 CFR 1910.134 at <http://www.osha.gov>.

The DPH is also asking each DEMHS region to identify 25 nurses who will be trained to conduct the fit testing in the coming week; and who will in turn provide fit testing to school nurses in their DEMHS region when the masks become available.

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The regional map to assist you in determining your region is available at <http://www.ct.gov/demhs/cwp/view.asp?a=1903&q=295316&demhsNav=>. If you are interesting in becoming a trainer or are already a trainer, please submit your name, contact information and region to Stephanie by Friday, October 30, 2009.

If you have questions, please contact Stephanie Knutson, School Health Consultant at 860-807-2108 or Stephanie.knutson@ct.gov.

CR:sgk

cc: Charlene Russell-Tucker, Associate Commissioner
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Leonard Guercia, DPH