

Message from USED to district superintendents

Sent: Wednesday, October 15, 2014 10:20 AM

Subject: Message to Superintendents: Resources on Public Health Concerns

Importance: High

Dear Superintendents,

As you are likely aware, the United States has been experiencing a nationwide outbreak of enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) associated with severe respiratory illness that has been especially harmful to children. At the same time, you and your communities may also have questions about the Ebola virus. To address both public health concerns, the U.S. Department of Education and our federal health partners have a number of informational resources to share with you.

Almost all of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-confirmed cases this year of EV-D68 infection have been among children. Many of the children had asthma or a history of wheezing. Many parents continue to be worried about the outbreak and want information about what they can do to prevent illness and protect themselves and their families. The CDC has developed information and resources for parents about EV-D68. Please help us to address parents' questions and concerns and make them aware that these resources are available.

Below are CDC resources about EV-D68 developed for parents:

- [Web Feature](#), "What Parents Need to Know About Enterovirus D68"
- [Drop-in newsletter article \(matte article\)](#), "Parents: Learn the Facts about Enterovirus D68"
- [Fact sheet for parents](#), "What Parents Need to Know about Enterovirus D68"
- [General questions and answers for the public](#)
- [Infographic: Keep Your Child from Getting and Spreading Enterovirus D68](#)

Here are just a few ideas of how you can use and share these resources:

- Most importantly, work with your schools to share CDC information with parents:
 - Print and send copies of the fact sheet and/or infographic home with children
 - Email parents links to information on the CDC web site
 - Post links to CDC information on schools' social media accounts
- Link to the URLs provided in the list above on your parent-facing web pages.
- Share the infographic or Web Feature with parents over social media. Below are some sample tweets or create your own:
 - Parents, CDC addresses your questions & concerns w/ new educational materials about EV-D68. <http://1.usa.gov/1o92Sdx>
 - Concerned about #enterovirus? Here's what you need to know about EV-D68 & respiratory illness. <http://1.usa.gov/1sC9Jfc>
 - Parents, follow these steps to protect kids, esp those w/ asthma, from EV-D68 & other viruses that cause respiratory illness. <http://go.usa.gov/VyzA>
- Syndicate content from the CDC web site. CDC encourages organizations to mirror CDC's web text through content syndication rather than copy text onto their web sites. Benefits include immediate and automatic updates whenever any changes are made on the CDC site and ensures all content is consistent and current across the Internet. If you'd like to include EV-D68 Web content without having to monitor and copy updates, visit [Content Syndication](#) for the free one-time setup instructions. Enterovirus D68 is listed under "Syndication Topics."
- Place the text of the matte article on your web site or in e-newsletters and other publications you have that reach parents.

Message from USED to district superintendents

- Work with local child care facilities and organizations in your area to share CDC information with parents:
 - Ask child care centers to place the drop-in article in parent newsletters
 - Ask child care centers to print and post the fact sheet and/or infographic
- Encourage parents and community partners to share the fact sheet with doctor's offices, clinics, faith communities, and other community settings.

Yesterday, the CDC issued a [press release](#) sharing news about a new lab test developed by CDC for EV-D68 which will allow more rapid testing of specimens. Because of this new test, confirmed cases of EV-D68 will appear to rise rapidly over the next 7-10 days as specimen testing accelerates. However, changes in case counts won't represent a real-time influx of new cases.

Remember too, as enterovirus season is expected to taper off, flu activity usually begins to increase in October. While there is not a vaccine to prevent illness from enteroviruses, the single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year. Many resources for parents and others can be found on the [CDC flu web site](#). CDC recommends that **ALL** children 6 months old or older get a flu vaccine.

Finally, we know your communities may also have questions about what schools can do to keep students and adults safe from the Ebola virus. The President has made control of Ebola a top national security priority, and we as a nation have spent more than \$100 million fighting this outbreak since the first cases were reported last March in Africa. Our national health system has the capacity and expertise to quickly detect and contain this disease and is working with states and school districts to ensure the safety of our students and school employees. As you likely know, the CDC is continually updating its information on Ebola, information that can be found here: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>.

Our Department's Office of Safe and Healthy Students has a number of materials available regarding Readiness and Emergency Management of Schools in crisis situations, and those materials can be found here: <http://rems.ed.gov/>. One resource at this web link is steps the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) has taken to keep parents and community partners continually updated on the Ebola situation there, including establishing a web site: <http://www.dallasisd.org/healthupdates>.

Additional materials developed by the DISD Communications Team included there are:

[All Staff Notice about Ebola](#)

[Parent Letter — English](#)

[Parent Letter — Spanish](#)

[Ebola FAQ](#)

[Talking with Children about Ebola](#)

[Recognizing and Reducing Signs of Anxiety in Times of Crisis](#)

We sincerely hope that you find these materials beneficial and that you will share them through all of your available networks and communication vehicles.

Thank you.

The National Public Engagement Team
The State and Local Public Engagement Team
U.S. Department of Education