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To: District Superintendents of Schools
Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools
Administrators of Public, Charter, and Nonpublic Schools

From: Cosimo Tangorra, Jr.

Subject: NYS Department of Health Confirms Cases of Serious Respiratory Virus

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has issued an advisory related to enterovirus EV-D68; a serious respiratory illness that has been confirmed in over a dozen children in New York State. This virus can cause severe respiratory illness in children especially those with asthma and other chronic respiratory conditions, sometimes resulting in hospitalization. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), school-age children are most likely to get infected with such enteroviruses and become ill because they do not yet have immunity (protection) from previous exposures to these viruses. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) would therefore like to provide the following guidance.

According to the NYSDOH, the EV-D68 virus is transmitted through close contact with a person who is already infected, and/or by touching objects or surfaces contaminated with the virus and then touching one's mouth, nose, or eyes. There is no specific treatment or anti-viral medications available, but aligned with the NYSDOH's guidance, NYSED is requesting all school employees to enact and follow the prevention efforts noted below which are essential in minimizing spread of the virus:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching of eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.
- Use the same precautions used to prevent the spread of influenza.

Symptoms include, but are not limited to: fever, runny nose, sneezing, coughing and body aches. Most infected persons have no symptoms or only mild symptoms, but some infections can be serious. NYSED recommends that any student or staff reporting

or exhibiting such symptoms is referred to their healthcare provider for accurate treatment and diagnosis. Staff or students exhibiting more severe symptoms should be seen immediately by a health care provider in accordance with school policy.

School health personnel should consider EV-D68 as a possible cause of acute, unexplained severe respiratory illness, even if the patient does not have a fever. Additionally, school health personnel should report suspected clusters of severe respiratory illness to local and state health departments. EV-D68 is not nationally notifiable; however state and local health departments may have additional guidance on reporting.

School administrators are strongly encouraged to share this information with their district medical director and professional health care personnel (school nurses). Questions should be directed to the Office of Student Support Services at 518-486-6090.

Resources:

The NYSDOH:

http://www.health.ny.gov/press/releases/2014/2014-09-12_ev-d68_confirmed.htm

Local County Health Departments Contact Information:

http://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/

For additional information about enterovirus EV-D68:

<http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV-D68.html>

Graphic for display from the CDC:

<http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV68-infographic.html>