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**Date: June 17, 2009 at 2:30 pm**  
**For Immediate Release**

The Otsego County Department of Health reports that there have been clusters of influenza like illness at Morris Central School, Oneonta High School, and Cooperstown Middle High School. As previously reported Morris Central School had 7 cases confirmed for H1N1, and Oneonta High School had 2 cases confirmed. This afternoon the Otsego County Department of Health was notified that 8 of the 9 cases pending for the Cooperstown Middle High School were confirmed for H1N1 and the result of the 9<sup>th</sup> is still pending. The students affected in the clusters have either recovered or are recovering at home.

It is important to remember that H1N1 influenza does not appear to be any more severe than seasonal flu and that good hygiene practices are the best defense against this and other communicable diseases.

The Otsego County Department of Health wants you to protect yourself and your family against H1N1. Here are some ways to stop the spread of germs and sickness and take care of your family.

- **Stay home if you are sick** for seven days or 24 hours after symptoms free whichever is longest. It is important to understand that you can still spread the disease for 7 days.
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or use a tissue and dispose of the tissue in a covered trash bin.
  - Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of their elbow. Cough or sneeze into your sleeve – not your hands!
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
  - Teach your children how to wash their hands often. Washing with soap and water for a least 20 seconds is ideal (that's about as long as it take to sing "Happy Birthday" twice)
  - Teach your children the proper use of hand sanitizer. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used.
    - If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands
    - If using hand wipes, dispose of properly
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
  - Teach your children to keep their hands away from their face and avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you or your child are ill with flu like symptoms, **stay home from work or school, public places/gatherings and limit contact with others** to keep from infecting them.
- Clean shared space more often such as phone receivers, keyboards, steering wheels and office equipment.
- Refrain from sharing personal items such as forks, spoons, toothbrushes and towels

The symptoms of H1N1 flu include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, diarrhea and vomiting. If you feel you/your child need medical attention, contact your medical provider to determine if care is needed.

If we all practice good hygiene we can limit the spread of germs. Thank you for your cooperation in helping to build a healthier and safer community.

For further information about swine flu you can contact the New York State Department of Health hotline at 1-800-808-1987, on the web at [www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov) or the Otsego County Department of Health at 607-547-4230, on the web at [www.otsegocounty.com](http://www.otsegocounty.com).

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