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County of Ottawa

Health Department

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Dear Lakewood Families:

The Ottawa County Health Department is committed to providing timely information regarding the current A H1N1 Influenza situation. Today we have answered a number of calls from parents and community members who are eager to have information that will help them to keep their children and families healthy.

You may be aware that Lakewood has a probable case of the A H1N1 flu and has followed the recommendations of the Ottawa County Health Department and the Center for Disease Control related to school closure. These guidelines recommend schools close for 7 days following the confirmation of a "probable" case. If no new cases are confirmed, Lakewood classes will resume on Monday, May 11.

This recommendation includes the cancellation of all school functions and extracurricular activities that are coordinated through Lakewood. It is with regret that this includes the school coordinated Tulip Time activities. These school closure recommendations do not exclude healthy children from participating in community sponsored activities such as little league, etc. As long as your child is without flu-like symptoms (fever of over 100 degrees, coughing, sore throat, body aches and sneezing), they may participate in their normal routine outside of school.

We feel it is important to make recommendations that provide a balance between national guidelines and what we know about the virus. This strain of influenza, so far, has symptoms similar to seasonal influenza and has shown to be low in its severity and very responsive to antiviral treatment. However, it is important to understand that we are still learning about how this virus affects people and must use caution in making recommendations about protecting public health.

Please remember that this virus can be prevented by practicing these recommendations:

- **Wash hands often:** Washing hands often with soap and water will help protect against germs. While not a substitution for proper hand washing, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if needed.
- **Cover the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing:** Cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or use the inner elbow when coughing or sneezing. This will help prevent others from becoming sick.
- **Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth:** Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- **Keep a distance:** Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Also sick people should keep a distance from well people to prevent the spread.
- **Keep children home from school when they are sick:** This will help prevent others from catching the illness.

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