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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

Recommendation to Suspend Student Out-of-State Travel Due to Influenza A (H1N1) Virus Pandemic for Kanawha County Schools

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**TO: Dr. Ronald Duerring, Superintendent
Kanawha County Schools**

FROM: Rahul Gupta, MD, MPH, Health Officer

In response to an intensifying outbreak in the United States and internationally caused by a new Swine Origin Influenza Virus (SOIV); also called influenza A (H1N1), the United States Government has declared a public health emergency in the United States. The Kanawha-Charleston Health Department has issued the following advisory notice.

The Kanawha-Charleston Health Department is concerned that students may be exposed to the illness during school-related travel outside of West Virginia into an area that may have confirmed or probable cases of the Influenza A (H1N1).

The Kanawha-Charleston Health Department is recommending that all out-of-state school-related travel (field trips, sporting events, etc.) to areas with confirmed, probable, or suspect cases be suspended until further notice. The purpose of restricting travel is to reduce disease transmission and associated morbidity and mortality during the 2009 H1N1 virus outbreak in the US.

As we continue to monitor the situation, we would like the public to understand that this is a rapidly and constantly evolving situation and the current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) is being updated daily. West Virginia has no confirmed or probable cases at this time.

New cases of Influenza A (H1N1) are being identified across the United States daily and it is impossible to predict where new cases will occur. Therefore, we recommend that if a school trip is being planned to an unaffected out-of-state area, please check the most updated information for that area immediately prior to your departure.

At this time, we have no reason to recommend school closure or cancel in-state school-related activities. Should the situation change and cases be identified in the schools, it may become necessary to take additional precautions to limit the spread of this virus.

Schools should continue to promote everyday preventive actions for students and staff:

- 1) Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- 2) Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- 3) Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- 4) Avoid close contact with sick people.
- 5) Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- 6) If you get influenza-like illness symptoms, stay home from work or school except to seek medical care and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.