

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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

Date: November 17, 2010

From: NYSED Office of Student Support Services

Subject: Updated Guidance on CDC Respiratory Protection Requirements

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released updated guidance on infection control measures for health care personnel, inclusive of school nurses, who are in contact with persons with influenza symptoms. This guidance may be found at the following Web-address: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/infectioncontrol_seasonalflu_ICU2010.pdf. According to this updated guidance, the H1N1 virus is to be treated in the same manner as all influenza viruses. As a consequence, health care personnel are no longer required to wear respiratory protection (N-95 mask) when in contact with persons suspected of, or confirmed to have influenza. Based on this updated guidance, the New York State Department of Labor Public Employees Safety and Health Division (PESH) has canceled State Directive A-10 requiring their use. This memo can be viewed at the following Web-address: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/schoolhealth/schoolhealthservices/DOLRespiratoryH1N1.pdf>.

However, it is important to note that there still remain certain conditions under which school nurses, and other health care personnel should be wearing the N-95 mask. The N-95 mask should be used for any aerosol generating procedure conducted on persons suspected of, or confirmed to have influenza. Aerosol generating procedures that may occur in the school setting may include both open airway suctioning and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation.

If these conditions exist, the school should continue with a complete respiratory protection program, including fit-testing, training, and medical assessments. Schools are also encouraged to continue other infection control measures such as hand washing, respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette, and appropriate management of ill students to minimize spread of influenza.

School administrators are encouraged to share this information with their district medical director and health care personnel (school nurses).

Questions should be directed to the Office of Student Support Services at 518-486-6090.