Masser, Michelle

(C)

From: Lashway, Lisa
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2013 2:36 PM
To: Canning, Sean
Cc: Wilpert, Frank; Giles, Helen; Masser, Michelle
Subject: FW: NJ Flu Health Alert

Please see information below.

Michelle Masser
Deputy Clerk

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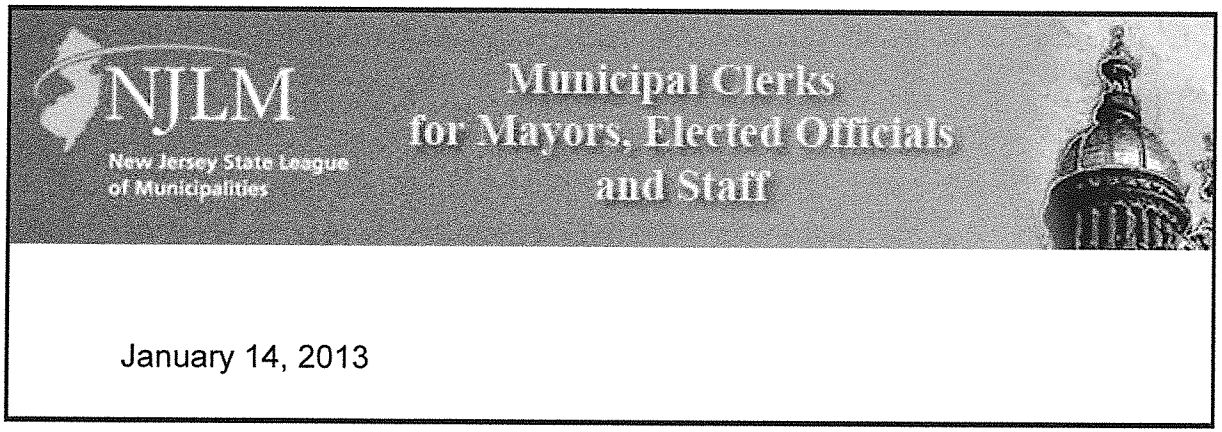
PO Box 450
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

From: NJLM to Municipal Officials [mailto:njlm-clerks@cityconnections.com]
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2013 2:33 PM
To: Lashway, Lisa
Subject: NJ Flu Health Alert

To view an online version of this email, click here.



January 14, 2013

RE: NJ Health Info on Flu Activity

Dear Mayor:

New Jersey Health Commissioner, Mary O'Dowd, has asked us to share with you the following important public health information.

Like most of the nation, New Jersey is experiencing widespread flu activity. This is also the earliest flu season we've seen since the 2003-2004 season. The strain of flu that is circulating this season is more severe, with higher numbers of hospitalizations and deaths. The good news is that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is reporting that the flu vaccine is a very good match for the strains of flu circulating in the community and early data indicates that individuals who are vaccinated have been 62% less likely to visit a doctor due to illness from the flu.

The flu can be especially dangerous for the very young, the very old, pregnant women and those with underlying medical conditions like asthma, cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

The Department's flu surveillance system tells us that New Jersey is experiencing an increase in Emergency Department (ED) visits and outbreaks in nursing homes.

Influenza can cause serious illness or death. Underscoring the severity of the flu season, nationally there have been 20 pediatric deaths reported—unfortunately including two New Jersey children---a 14-year-old Ocean County boy and an eight-month-old Camden County boy.

The Department continues to monitor the situation closely and we have escalated our ongoing communications with our public health partners and health care providers.

There are several things each of you can do to help protect the residents of our communities and to prevent the spread of the

flu.

First and foremost, flu vaccination is the single most important step that everyone can take to protect themselves and their families against infection. As local leaders, I would encourage you to work with your local health departments to promote the importance of residents protecting themselves against the flu by getting vaccinated.

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get a seasonal flu vaccine each year. A flu shot is especially important for certain groups of individuals who are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications. These groups include: pregnant women, children under the age of five, but especially younger than 2 years old, people 65 years of age and older, and people with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, cancer, diabetes and HIV).

Residents and employees can find flu clinics by visiting the Department's website at nj.gov/health and click on the "Find a Find a Flu Shot Locator" icon. This locator allows residents to search clinics by zip codes.

There are some very simple preventive steps that everyone can take to stop the spread of germs:

- Cover our mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough
- Wash your hands frequently
- Stay home from work or school when you are sick

Those who do get the flu should stay home for at least 24 hours after a fever is gone—except to get medical care. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine. You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events and public gatherings. It is important that employers understand this important

prevention step.

Flu-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also may have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu, and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

If you get the flu, there are prescription antiviral drugs that can treat your illness. Early treatment is especially important for the elderly, the very young, people with certain chronic health conditions and pregnant women. Check with your health care provider to see if you are a candidate for this medication and follow instructions for taking this medication.

For more information about the "Take 3" actions to fight the flu, please visit the CDC webpage, http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm

For general flu information and resources, please visit: http://nj.gov/health/flu/generalinfo.shtml.

We will do you our best to keep you informed on this and other crucial public health matters.

Very truly yours,

William G. Dressel, Jr.

Executive Director

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please contact Shirley Cade at scade@njslom.com or 609-695-3481 ext. 114 with the name of your municipality and fax number. Thank you.

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New Jersey League of Municipalities
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