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PRESS RELEASE

School Absenteeism Higher Than Normal

LaPorte County, IN (October 13, 2009) - The LaPorte County Health Department has received notice from school systems across the county that absenteeism rates are higher than normal for this time of year. The schools involved have already sent home notices with students.

“We believe this is due to the influx of the H1N1 virus,” said Dr. Charles Janovsky, Health Officer for the LaPorte County Health Department (LCHD). “One school system has 30% of their middle-school-aged children out sick, and another has 57 children out from one elementary school. As the CDC has stated, children are most likely to get the H1N1 virus...and any virus is most often spread by children rather than adults. It is imperative that families use standard precautions to halt the spread of the H1N1 virus. This virus has usually been a mild disease, but as we’ve seen locally, it can create complications that can be very severe.”

Standard precautions include:

- Wash your hands frequently with soapy water.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue and dispose of it—then wash your hands.
- If you don’t have a tissue handy, cough or sneeze into your elbow or inside the front of your shirt. Then wash your hands.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Questions about the H1N1 influenza and the vaccine which will be available later this month should be directed to the LaPorte County Health Department at 219/326-6808 X2200 or by email to H1N1@laportecounty.org. Visit the website at www.laportecounty.org and click on “current local flu information” just beneath the waving flag.