



# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

PHILIP RUMORE, PRESIDENT

September 14, 2009

## SPECIAL H1N1 EDITION

Our position on the H1N1 (swine flu) virus is – we will leave no stone unturned to ensure that we have done our best to prevent any further deaths from H1N1.

We have been pressing the District, our State and National unions and governmental bodies to establish proactive written comprehensive procedures and policies in anticipation of an H1N1 outbreak. See [btfny.org](http://btfny.org) under H1N1.

BTF information packets (folios) (1 – 3 depending on the number of staff) have been sent to each school. They should be in your faculty rooms. They contain the latest information that we have from most sources. They will be updated when appropriate. We have a limited number at BTF. If you would like another folder, ask your Delegate Chairperson to call the BTF. The folio is a good place to keep H1N1 information.

Hopefully, we will avoid an outbreak; however, we need to be prepared in case there is one.

The District has updated (Aug. 28, 2009) its H1N1 Flu Protocol. We have sent copies to schools. Expect other updates as information is received.

We remain concerned about some issues. Although we have written the District several times relating to the effectiveness of the hand sanitizers in the schools, the District has not responded to us. (See [btfny.org](http://btfny.org) – under H1N1/BTF Questions Hand Sanitizers).

It appears that in most cases the hand sanitizers should contain over 60% alcohol. While alcohol presents problems, there appears to be a product that is not alcohol based that is effective. We will be pursuing this.

School busses remain a concern (See [www.btfny.org](http://www.btfny.org)). Obviously, students and adults in an extremely confined area where there are airborne viruses and physical contact is problematic.

For now, we offer the following:

Hand washing with soap and water appears to be the first line of defense. We ask teachers to reinforce this with students not only when they are at school, but when they are at home as well. If there are shortages of soap, etc. in the schools, call the BTF.

Demonstrate and remind students to either use a clean tissue (which is then discarded) or to cough or sneeze into

their elbows. While this is not natural for many, your modeling of this will help.

If a student exhibits flu like symptoms, sneezing, fever, coughing, dizziness, etc., send him/her to the nurse or designated place in the school.

If you have flu-like symptoms, do as you always do, remain home until you are without a fever for 24-hours without the use of fever lowering drugs (aspirin, Tylenol, etc.).

Seriously consider getting both the regular and H1N1 swine flu vaccinations. Most prefer going to their personal physicians. Many schools will, however, be providing them. Children and women who are pregnant will be vaccinated first.

Hand sanitizers – when thorough hand washing is impractical, the use of an effective hand sanitizer is advised. Until we have confirmed that the ones currently (as of September 2009) available in schools are, indeed, effective we remain concerned; however, why take a chance, as they may be beneficial. We know they work against bacteria and MRSA.

At home you might want to use Purel or a similar 60% + alcohol based product.

Review the most current District H1N1 protocol. We have sent several copies to your school.

Check the following excellent websites:

Center for Disease Control (CDC) – [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)

New York State Department of Health - <http://usny.nysed.gov/swine-flu-info.html> The CDC Toolkit for Schools – [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/toolkit/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/toolkit/) [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

National Education Association (NEA) – [www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org) NEA Health Information Network – [www.neahin.org](http://www.neahin.org)  
American Federation of Teachers – [www.aft.org/topics/h1n1](http://www.aft.org/topics/h1n1)

New York State United Teachers – [www.nysut.org](http://www.nysut.org)

Health Care Canada – [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

And, of course, the BTF's website, [www.btfny.org/H1N1](http://www.btfny.org/H1N1)

We hope that if there is an outbreak of H1N1 it will be minor; however, we will do everything possible to be prepared.

Remember, our outbreak was also in the Spring. We will not be complacent. If you have questions or concerns call the BTF.