



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH
Commissioner

June 2009

Dear Community and Faith leaders,

The New York City Health Department recognizes that many New Yorkers are concerned about their own health and the well-being of their families and communities as we confront novel H1N1 influenza outbreak. We share that concern. Our goal is to reduce the spread and severity of illness.

It is important that all New Yorkers have access to accurate, up-to-date information about H1N1 flu, what to do to stay healthy, and what to do if they are feeling ill. Because you're a trusted source of information in your community, we want to work with you get this information out as widely as possible. By providing your communities with accurate information, you can address fears, reduce anxiety, and help keep people healthy.

The key messages we need to convey are straightforward:

- If you develop a fever and cough, stay home from work or school until you have felt completely well for 24 hours.
- If you have a fever with a cough or sore throat, and your age or medical condition places you at risk of complications from flu, call your doctor to get a prescription for antiviral medicine (the attached fact sheet explains who may be at increased risk). You do not need to be tested for flu, or seek treatment at a hospital, unless you are severely ill.
- Whatever your age or health condition, go to a hospital immediately if a flu-like illness becomes so severe that you have trouble breathing.
- Remember to wash your hands frequently, and always cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze.

In addition to the attached fact sheet, the Health Department has amassed a wealth of educational materials, including posters and other handouts. All are available through 311, or on the Health Department website (www.nyc.gov/health). If you need printed materials in languages other than English, please call 311.

The Health Department is taking action to cope with this outbreak, but we cannot confront the problem alone. All New Yorkers have a responsibility to do their part. Collectively, we can mitigate the consequences. Thank you for being part of that effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas R. Frieden".

Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH