



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

JOHN HELLERSTEDT, M.D.
COMMISSIONER

P.O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347
1-888-963-7111
TTY: 1-800-735-2989
www.dshs.state.tx.us

February 8, 2016

RE: Flu Information on Campus Websites

Dear Superintendent and School Administration,

In 2007, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill No. 1059, also known as the Emily Lastinger Act, which requires all public school districts to post immunization information prominently on the school district's website, if the district has one. The legislation was driven forward because of Emily Lastinger, a vibrant and healthy three year old who died from influenza. She was not vaccinated with the influenza vaccine. In an effort to expand immunization awareness, especially for the flu, we ask that you please post flu vaccine information on each individual campus website in addition to your district site.

Contrary to popular belief, the influenza season often lasts until mid-May. In a February 1, 2016 health alert, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that influenza activity is increasing across the country. Because the flu can have a significant impact on an educational setting, it is crucial that parents have access to flu information and resources year round. Even though most children infected with influenza recover with little to no complications, some cases result in hospitalization and sometimes even death. In the 2014-2015 flu season, 19 influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported in Texas. No child should suffer like this: please encourage parents to get the flu shot for their children and for themselves.

Visit www.TexasFlu.org for more information on the flu and the flu vaccine. The website features helpful resources to post on your campus webpages, like a "Flu Vaccine Finder" map to help find flu shot providers in your area, and additional educational materials to use in your district. You may also explore our website, www.ImmunizeTexas.com, for more information on school immunization requirements and the flu vaccine. To order additional copies of the flu materials that are enclosed in this mailing, go to www.ImmunizeTexasOrderForm.com.

Together, we can fight the flu. Thank you for sharing this information on your campus websites, showing your commitment to the health and well-being of Texas students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monica Gamez".

Monica Gamez
Infectious Disease Control Unit Director