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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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# **Lions and Tigers and Bears...or H1N1... “Oh My!”**

**By Larry R. Hook**  
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SPRINGBORO, Ohio – I just came back from a meeting of all school districts in Warren County with the Warren County Dept. of Health. We were being updated on the status of the H1N1 flu virus in Warren County and how vaccines will be made available to citizens throughout the county. What is important to understand is that we are not talking about the “Black Plague,” which was one of the worst natural disasters in history that swept over Europe in the 14<sup>th</sup> century causing the death of one third of the entire population. What we are talking about is a new strain of influenza or the flu. As we know, flu (any flu) symptoms can range from mild to severe, depending on the individual. The H1N1 flu virus is a new strain, which means that it hasn’t been around long enough for people to develop natural immunities to it. The Warren County Dept. of Health has told us that vaccines are being developed and will likely be available sometime near the end of October or first of November.

One other point I would like to make is that we have received numerous calls from people telling us that this person or that person has a confirmed case of H1N1 flu. All I can tell you is what the Dept. of Health told us. There have only been four (4) confirmed cases of H1N1 flu in Warren County since April of 2009. A confirmed case means that the doctor sent the culture (from the patient) to a laboratory that actually tested it for H1N1. This is a very expensive test and since last spring the Ohio Dept. of Health is not recommending the test unless an individual is hospitalized. What is happening today in the vast majority of doctor offices and urgent care facilities is that H1N1 flu is being diagnosed by the following criteria: a positive “rapid flu test” for Influenza A, accompanied by a cough, sore throat and fever. This test indicates you may have the flu...it could be H1N1 or Influenza A, as they both give a positive reaction. According to the CDC none of the rapid tests currently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are able to distinguish N1N1 flu from other flu viruses. Whether it is actually Influenza A or H1N1 it is treated the same. Go home...go to bed...drink plenty of fluids and follow your doctors orders.

In closing it is my sincere hope that none of you experience any kind of flu this year. There are things we all should do to make for a healthy winter season. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) out of Atlanta, Georgia talks over and over

about the three most important things that families, students, and school personnel can do to keep from getting sick and spreading the flu, including the H1N1 flu virus. They are:

- **PRACTICE GOOD HAND HYGIENE:** Students and staff members should wash their hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol based hand cleaners are also effective. Wash hands thoroughly including between fingers and the back of the hand for at least 20 seconds or the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice.
- **PRACTICE RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE:** The main way that the flu spreads is from person to person in the droplets produced by coughs and sneezes, so it is important to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. **If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands.**
- **STAYING HOME IF YOU ARE SICK:** Students, staff, and families that are sick should stay home until at least 24 hours AFTER they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever. This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medicines (i.e., ibuprofen or acetaminophen) and even if they are using antiviral medicines. **The school district will send sick children home.**

Students, staff, and their families **MUST** take personal responsibility for helping to slow the spread of the flu virus by practicing these steps to keep from getting sick with flu and protecting others from getting the flu.