

Recordpub.com

Southeast OKs in-school vaccination program

Mike Sever
October 22, 2009

By Mike Sever

Record-Courier staff writer

The Southeast School District has agreed to host a cost-free, school-based H1N1 vaccination clinic for K-12 students. Southeast was the last school district in Portage County to agree to have in-school vaccination clinics.

The agreement was reached Tuesday after a meeting of Southeast Superintendent Tom Harrison, Superintendent Dewey Chapman of the Portage County Educational Service Center, and Portage County Health Commissioner DuWayne Porter.

Harrison had said he wanted the health department to hold the in-school clinics at night or on a weekend so parents could accompany their children.

Harrison said he learned during Tuesday's meeting that, once school based vaccination programs begin, parents who want to accompany their children during vaccination will have the option to bring their children to clinics at the Portage County Health Department in Ravenna.

Those clinics are to be held in the afternoon and early evening for students in any county school district who missed the in-school clinics. Details about those clinics are not yet final.

“We are pleased there will be options for parents who want to accompany their children at the health department (clinics) and we are happy to help provide the no-cost school clinic,” Harrison said.

Porter described the meeting as “a very cordial and productive discussion” facilitated by Chapman.

Porter said he hopes to have the first clinics as early as next Thursday and Friday, as supplies of vaccine are received.

Only those students with signed permission slips will be vaccinated. Permission slips and information on H1N1 and the vaccines have not yet gone out, Porter said.

The health department will deliver them to schools “to let parents know exactly what’s going to happen, to allay their fears,” Porter said.

Porter said it was always the health department’s intention to exclude parents from only the vaccination area.

“We have people who have spent their career handling kids,” Porter said.

At the school-based clinics, parents will be permitted to be at the school but are not to accompany their child into the vaccination area.

“They can be right outside the door if they think their child may need comforting,” Porter said.

“There’s a safety and congestion issue. It’s our concern to get the kids moving through there very quickly in an efficient and safe manner. We really don’t have the staff to handle a crowd,” he said.

Vaccination clinics for the general public may not start until mid-December, Porter said.