



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Video educates preschoolers about controlling infections

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pandemic influenza occurs when a new virus emerges for which people have little or no immunity and for which there is no vaccine. Nearly half of avian influenza (H5N1) cases in the world have been in children, and there are precautions that can be taken to prevent the spread from person to person.

The Alabama Department of Public Health is introducing a storybook video to teach children infection control measures such as hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when sick. This is part of the effort to ensure that even the youngest Alabama citizen is aware of, planning for, and preparing for the possibility of pandemic influenza.

A cartoon character DVD titled "Mimi Mouse Learns Healthy Habits" is being sent to all Alabama child care centers statewide during November. The video is accompanied by coloring sheets and stickers and will be sent to all child care centers statewide during November.

"With flu season right around the corner and the recent attention given to staph infections, Mimi Mouse provides very important information that will be helpful in reducing transmission of colds, flu and staph infections," said Dr. Thomas Miller, assistant state health officer for personal and community health. "Parents should ask their child's school or child care center when the presentations will be shown."

Children are more likely than adults to spread germs, so the Alabama Department of Public Health has made a strong effort to educate them about infection control measures as early as possible. Alabama is the first state to use the new Channing Bete educational video which was created specifically for child care centers' use.

The DVD was introduced to preschool children at Taylor Road Baptist Church's child care center in Montgomery at a premiere showing on Wednesday. This program follows a project last spring in which letters and pandemic influenza educational folders were sent to all exempt and non-exempt child care providers to educate the directors and staff about pandemic influenza.

"We are excited that Alabama's children will have the opportunity to learn and practice good preventive methods from an early age," Dr. Miller added. "Alabama's child care centers have an

important role to play in teaching young children, and this cartoon video will help children and adults alike prevent transmission of bacteria and viruses to others.

Other recent educational projects include a four-disc presentation set and handbooks that the State Department of Education distributed to all faculty and staff statewide. In 2008 an initiative will utilize VISTA volunteers to distribute the video to child care centers that meet less frequently, such as Sunday morning nurseries and Mothers/Fathers Days Out. New pandemic influenza educational printed materials include the publication "Prepare for Home Care" in adult and child versions.

More information about pandemic influenza is available at www.adph.org/pandemicflu.