

Children's Flu Fighters to the rescue!

Like the rest of the nation, Wisconsin experienced a surge of illnesses related to the H1N1 (swine) flu virus in spring 2009. Schools and workplaces were faced with decisions about shutting down, and community organizations came together to collaborate on prevention tactics.

The summer brought relief from the virus risk, but health officials knew that come fall, not only would H1N1 return, so would the regular flu season.

That is when Children's Hospital and Health System mobilized. At the beginning of the fall flu season, the health system launched "Children's Flu Fighters," a hygiene campaign aimed at school-age kids. The campaign used key messages communicated through cartoons to encourage children and their caregivers to use effective techniques to minimize the spread of flu.

Flu Fighters was promoted statewide using e-mail blasts and news releases. Information was distributed through health system members, including outpatient clinics, the Emergency Department/Trauma Center, Children's Health Education Center, Children's Service Society of Wisconsin, primary care physicians and Milwaukee-based school nurses.

(over)



2009 campaign highlights

-  More than 4,900 Flu Fighter kits were distributed throughout Wisconsin. These kits included tips on hand hygiene, staying healthy and other educational messages aimed at flu prevention.
-  More than 8,500 people visited the website for important flu information between October 2009 and January 2010.
-  More than 100,000 bottles of hand sanitizer were distributed throughout the state.

Missy Clean, Captain Cough, Super Sneeze and R&R Kid helped spread messages throughout the state about proper techniques for hand washing, coughing and sneezing. The super heroes appeared on the packets that included hand sanitizer, stickers, posters, mirror clings and other educational materials to share information and help reduce the spread of germs.

A website, ChildrensFluFighters.com, helped deliver these important messages. During the height of flu season, there were blog posts twice weekly to keep caregivers up to date on H1N1 information and reinforce hygiene tips. For the younger audience, there were games that reinforced the hygiene messages.

Throughout the state, more than 2,300 website visitors registered for updates and requested packets. The message of flu prevention, detection and general wellness was sent statewide to teachers, coaches, school nurses, daycare providers, parents and other caregivers. More than 4,900 Flu Fighter kits – and 100,000 bottles of hand sanitizer – were distributed throughout the state. Children’s Hospital provided these resources to the community free of charge. The hospital subsidized all of the costs associated with the production and distribution of the kits.



How you can help

Children often are impacted by local, state or federal policies that affect their health care. They need others to be their voice, which is why these efforts rely on the strength and action of people who want to make a difference for children.

Join Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin’s Children’s Advocacy Network today and help us make a difference in the lives of children and families in our communities. Through CAN, you help ensure that children’s concerns are heard when policies are being made. The network sends members action alerts and legislation updates and provides tools that you need to help you take action on issues important to children’s health.

Join CAN at chw.org/can.