

# ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Adirondack Bank Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 185 Genesee St., Utica, NY 13501

ANTHONY J. PICENTE, JR.  
ONEIDA COUNTY EXECUTIVE



PHYLLIS D. ELLIS, BSN, MS, F.A.C.H.E.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

## ADMINISTRATION

Phone: (315) 798-6400 ☎ Fax: (315) 266-6138

## NEWS RELEASE

Date: September 10, 2014

For Immediate Release

Contact: Sandra Pejicic, 798-5748

### ***Enterovirus impact can be minimized***

The best defense against a rare virus that has caused severe respiratory illness in hundreds of children across about a dozen states is proper hand-washing, reminded health officials from the Oneida County Health Department and the county's hospitals, Rome Memorial Hospital, St. Elizabeth Medical Center and Faxton St. Luke's Healthcare.

Although there are no laboratory confirmed cases of Enterovirus D68 in New York State, the Oneida County Health Department and the county's hospitals are prepared to respond if the virus continues to move east, said Oneida County Director of Health Phyllis D. Ellis.

The rare respiratory virus known as Enterovirus D68, or EV-D68, is part of the family of viruses that includes the common cold. The virus likely spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or touches contaminated surfaces, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

You can help protect yourself from respiratory illnesses by following these steps:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds;
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands;
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick;
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick; and
- Stay out of crowds, and home from work or school, if you feel ill.

Most children infected with this virus will appear to have a cold, with runny nose, sneezing and cough, which will resolve itself with rest and symptom management. There are not any antiviral medications available to treat the virus. Some children, especially those with asthma and other health problems, are at higher risk of complications and may need to be hospitalized to receive intensive treatment of the symptoms.

The Oneida County Health Department has formed an internal response team to monitor guidance from the New York State Department of Health and the CDC to coordinate a response with external partners, according to Ellis. Surveillance activities are ongoing to identify potential outbreaks.

Local hospitals are sharing information about the virus with staff and providers and reviewing resource levels of medications and any specialized pediatric supplies that could be needed.

###

“PROMOTING AND PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF ONEIDA COUNTY”