



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Montgomery Law Helps Safeguard Youth Against Influenza Virus

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(Albany, NY): New York children and their parents will now be better informed about the influenza virus and how to safeguard against it under legislation (S.4645-B/A775-B) sponsored by **State Senator Velmanette Montgomery** (D-Brooklyn) and enacted into law this week (Chapter 36).

Under this legislation, the NYS Department of Health will administer an influenza education and outreach program to parents and guardians of children ages six months to 18 years of age who are enrolled in day care programs, nursery schools, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, school-age child care program, and in public and non-public schools. Information about influenza and the importance of vaccinating against the virus will be posted on the Department's website. Schools and other child care settings will be required to notify parents that the information is available.

In 2007, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended that all children aged six months to eighteen years old receive a yearly influenza vaccine. Their research showed that each year about 20 percent of Americans were infected with influenza and approximately 36,000 people died with more than 200,000 people hospitalized.

"Vaccinating healthy youngsters protects the entire community," said Senator Montgomery. "Children represent the greatest transmitters of influenza, and educating students to take their yearly shots will prevent them from becoming infected and spreading diseases. I commend the Governor for signing this bill into law to keep our youth healthy and safe."

In expressing his support for the Montgomery bill, **Governor David Paterson**, said, "'Last year, the flu posed a genuine public health threat to the people of New York. We can never be too careful in getting the word out on how to prevent and treat the flu, especially for our children. "This legislation will help to distribute flu and flu vaccine information to more of New York's children and families to keep them safe and healthy during the flu season."

Influenza is a viral illness with typical [flu symptoms](#) of a fever, cough, chills, sore throat, headache and muscle aches. This usually begins about 1-4 days after being exposed to someone with the flu. Symptoms are normally mild to moderate in most people, but can be more severe in the elderly or very young children.

Given the large numbers of children who spend time in close proximities to one another, it is important to prevent the spread of influenza with a yearly vaccine. Doctors say the best time to receive the vaccine is in October or November.

For more information influenza and where to get vaccinated go to www.nyc.gov/flu.

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