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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The Illinois House of Representatives finds that influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus; and

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WHEREAS, The best way to help prevent seasonal influenza is by getting an influenza vaccination each year; and

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WHEREAS, Every year in the United States, an average of more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from influenza-related complications and approximately 36,000 people, most of whom are elderly, die from influenza-related causes; and

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WHEREAS, While influenza viruses can cause illness in people of any age group, children are most likely to get sick because their immune systems aren't strong enough to fight off the infection; children and young adults ages 5 to 19 are 3 to 4 times more likely to be infected with influenza than adults; school-aged children are the population group most responsible for transmission of contagious respiratory viruses, including influenza; and

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WHEREAS, The elderly make up the population that is most vulnerable to severe illness from influenza, due to weaker

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1 immune responses to vaccination; and

2 WHEREAS, The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and  
3 Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices  
4 recently began recommending universal routine seasonal  
5 influenza vaccination for all persons aged 6 months of age and  
6 older; and

7 WHEREAS, School-based vaccination programs have been  
8 documented to be an effective way to vaccinate children while  
9 reducing transmission and infection rates to the large  
10 community, while at the same time reducing rates of school  
11 absenteeism due to children being infected with influenza; and

12 WHEREAS, Increasing the focus on providing influenza  
13 vaccine to children targeted for immunization will also help  
14 efforts to build a sound foundation for future vaccination  
15 efforts; and

16 WHEREAS, Schools can be an effective infrastructure tool to  
17 improve pandemic planning by developing collaborations and  
18 enhancing partnerships between local health departments,  
19 schools, and other community health partners, so that those  
20 collaborations can be utilized to help facilitate mass  
21 immunization during a pandemic outbreak; and

1           WHEREAS, Although experience has demonstrated the  
2 feasibility and success of school-based influenza vaccination  
3 programs in vaccinating school-age children, the Illinois  
4 House of Representatives is aware that funding and logistical  
5 considerations, particularly involving the procurement and  
6 delivery of vaccine to children with private health insurance  
7 coverage, continue to present issues of program  
8 sustainability; therefore, be it

9           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
10 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
11 support school-based influenza mass vaccination collaborations  
12 among local health departments and elementary and secondary  
13 schools in their jurisdictions for the purpose of vaccinating  
14 school-age children against influenza in accordance with the  
15 recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and  
16 Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for  
17 the annual vaccination of all school-age children 5 through 18  
18 years of age; and be it further

19           RESOLVED, That these programs through coordination with  
20 local health departments, school nurses, school health care  
21 programs, and other local entities shall be voluntary for all  
22 participants; the influenza vaccination shall be administered  
23 only with the consent of the student's parent or legal  
24 guardian; and be it further

1           RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution shall be  
2 presented to the Illinois Department of Public Health and the  
3 Illinois State Board of Education.