

To: Cabinet Members
From: Governor Mark Parkinson
Date: August 27, 2009
Re: H1N1 Preparations

As this year's flu season approaches, we must work together to prepare to face the new challenges that the H1N1 flu virus is likely to present. As part of this effort, experts from KDHE and the Kansas Division of Emergency Management led the Cabinet through a table-top exercise titled "Preparing for H1N1" on August 4, 2009.

During the course of this exercise, the Cabinet identified several HR issues related to this subject that needed to be resolved. To address the questions posed by the Cabinet an across agency team of managers and human resource experts was convened and asked to make recommendations.

After considering the various options, I agree with the recommendations from this group. While I have no doubts that each of you can manage your agencies and responsibilities effectively, I think it is important that we have a consistent approach to these issues to help ensure equity for employees across the State workforce.

The good news is that the group agreed that the State of Kansas already has policies and practices in place to address almost all of the issues in the administrative and services categories. Most of these can be found in the *Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) HR Reference Guide*, which can be found at the following link: <http://www.da.ks.gov/ps/subject/continoperations.htm>

Recommendations

The group agreed that it would be best for **employees to be required to use accrued leave for absences associated with the H1N1 flu virus**. The only exception to this would be if, as a part of social distancing, well employees are instructed not to come to work. In this event, the group felt that it would be appropriate to provide employees with administrative leave.

The group also agreed that the State should explore the possibility of a *leave-advancement policy*, similar to a policy currently in place with the Federal government. This policy would allow employees who have no sick leave available to borrow against the sick leave that they will accrue in the future. Staff

from the Department of Administration is currently reviewing this policy and determining what would be necessary to implement such a policy for the State of Kansas.

I hope that you will all continue to prepare for the coming challenges and encourage you to familiarize yourself with your agency's COOP plans and try to identify any remaining issues that need to be addressed. With your cooperation, I am confident that the State of Kansas can manage through the upcoming flu season efficiently and effectively. Thank you.