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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

H1N1 Statement from the MSHSL Sports Medicine Advisory Committee

The advent of a new strain of influenza has prompted precautions for the athlete and other susceptible individuals, coaches with medical issues, or those under 25 years of age. At present a two-step immunization process will be available this fall which will be recommended to reduce the risk of infection.

Individuals with influenza will develop typical signs or symptoms of: fever (102°degrees F or greater), cough, muscle aches, runny nose, headache, sore throat with the potential for serious complications, i.e. pneumonia. Transmission of the virus will be more prevalent during the 5-7 days these symptoms are present.

Strict guidelines for reducing the risk of transmission focus on proper immunization and hygienic principles to reduce transmission:

- Proper hand washing;
- Don't share water bottles;
- Clean workout gear for each practice/competition.

Infected individuals should stay home until signs and symptoms have resolved. Once it has been determined that the individual has not had a fever for 24 hours the individual can resume regular activities. The 24-hour no-fever timeline should be achieved naturally, without the aid of fever reducing medications.

If an outbreak occurs on a team, communication with the athletic director should be promoted and closely followed with the school officials.

As the virus evolves, new guidelines may develop. The recommendations through the Minnesota Department of Public Health or Center for Disease Control Web sites should be followed.