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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**WASHTENAW COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH CONFIRMS SCHOOL CLOSURE
Huron Valley Catholic School Closes for One Week due to High Rates of Illness**

YPSILANTI, Mich., Nov 3, 2009 — Washtenaw County Public Health Department announced the first local school closure due to high rates of flu-like illness. Huron Valley Catholic School will close until Monday, Nov 9th. School officials made the decision after consulting with Public Health. Absenteeism due to flu-like illness at the private school in Ypsilanti reached over 30% percent on Monday. H1N1 influenza is likely responsible for the high rates of respiratory and flu-like illness in area schools. Across Michigan, over 500 school closures have occurred in the past month.

H1N1 influenza continues to circulate in the community. School illness rates are at historic highs; rates have surpassed the “peaks” typically expected during flu season. Flu season in this area generally peaks in January or February. Therefore, high rates of flu-like illness are unexpected at this time. H1N1 is presumed responsible for most flu-like illness ; currently, over 99% of circulating influenza is the novel H1N1 strain. However, only persons who are at high risk for or hospitalized with severe illness are being tested for H1N1.

For updates on the H1N1 vaccination clinic schedule, visit www.ewashtenaw.org/flu. Public Health nurses and health educators are available to answer more detailed questions 734-544-6700.

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