



Pittsburg State University

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

August 19, 2009

TO: All Faculty

FR: Lynette Olson
Interim Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: H1N1 Virus

As we approach the fall semester, members of the campus community have been developing strategies for preventing and dealing with the H1N1 Virus. There is a very real likelihood that students, faculty, and staff may personally contract the virus. Attached is a one page information sheet prepared by university administration regarding the virus and its potential impacts on students and faculty. We want to do all we can to avoid an outbreak as well as the potential negative impacts on students as they work to complete course requirements. I am certain you will want to take this serious issue into consideration as you plan for your classes and activities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

tp

Attachment

H1N1 (Swine Flu) - Potential Impact on Class Attendance August 2009

H1N1 (Swine Flu) is now a global pandemic. With the fall flu season rapidly approaching, health officials are predicting that college campuses may be among the hardest hit when the flu season returns this fall. While a vaccine is under production and is expected to be available sometime during the Fall 2009 semester, supply and availability is uncertain. Even though college campuses are expected to be locations of high frequency for the disease, it is currently unclear as to what priority universities will be given for access to the vaccine.

The U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that institutions of higher education promote everyday preventive actions for students and staff: 1) Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. 2) Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. 3) Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective. 4) Avoid close contact with sick people. 5) Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. **6) If you get influenza-like illness symptoms, stay home from work or school except to seek medical care and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.**

In simple terms, the CDC is emphasizing that the best action that individuals can take to limit the spread of the disease is self-isolation. The latest information indicates that those with influenza-like illness symptoms should stay home from work or school until 24 hours after the last signs of fever have subsided (unaided by any medication designed to relieve fever).

Given this recommendation, and the likelihood of significant occurrences of H1N1 in the campus population during the upcoming academic year, faculty members are encouraged to consider and be prepared to accommodate student absences in attendance, testing, and class assignment make-up policies. The concern is that restrictive policies, which would normally be prudent for proper classroom management, will lead students to violate the recommended self-isolation period and thus expose others to spread of the infection.

Specific information regarding H1N1 in the college environment and recommendations for the university setting from the CDC are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/college-alert.htm>

The Pittsburg State University Student Health Center also has additional information available at <http://www.pittstate.edu/office/health/>