

From: Tommy Oakman
To: All BRCC
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Subject: Influenza and Our College's Readiness

Good Afternoon Everyone:

As the international H1N1 flu (originally called swine flu) outbreak continues widening, local public health officials are confirming there are people with flu-like symptoms that are similar to those associated with the H1N1 flu virus in our communities.

Our College administration is genuinely concerned for the health and well-being of our employees and students at Blue Ridge Community College. The likelihood that this virus will affect our College community during the next few months is very high. We will continue closely monitoring this situation and will communicate all factual information to our employees and students as we are instructed to release from our Federal, State and County Public Health agencies.

We urge our students, faculty, and staff to self-monitor the health of themselves and their family members. Health officials continue to encourage practicing good hygiene, in order to limit the spread of the H1N1 and all other flu viruses.

Additional Information and Preventative Actions

A web page containing information about the H1N1 and other flu viruses will be added to our web site later this week. It will include tips to prevent catching the flu, proper hand washing practices, and links to useful web sites. More information will be forthcoming that will include a "what to do" list / link for classroom management during the upcoming influenza season.

Several dozen sanitation stations containing alcohol-based hand cleaner will be installed throughout campus to encourage good hygiene. Custodial Services are cleansing surfaces that are frequently touched by numerous individuals, such as wall light switches and door knobs, on a daily basis. We will also implement a regimen of frequent cleaning of publicly available computing stations.

Remember, the best protection we have to reduce the risk of infection is to be mindful of good hygiene procedures and practice them consistently.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) urges you to take the following actions to protect yourself and others from the flu: (source) <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm>

People with novel H1N1 flu who are cared for at home should:

- check with their health care provider about any special care they might need if they are pregnant or have a health condition such as diabetes, heart disease, asthma, or emphysema
- check with their health care provider about whether they should take antiviral medications
- stay home for 7 days after your symptoms begin or until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours, whichever is longer, except to seek medical care or for other necessities
- get plenty of rest
- drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated
- cover coughs and sneezes. Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub often and especially after using tissues and after coughing or sneezing into hands
- wear a facemask - if available and tolerable - when sharing common spaces with other household members to help prevent spreading the virus to others. This is especially important if other household members are at high risk for complications from influenza. For more information, see the Interim Recommendations for Facemask and Respirator Use
- avoid close contact with others - do not go to work or school while ill
- be watchful for emergency warning signs (see below) that might indicate you need to seek medical attention.

Should you have further questions, don't hesitate being in touch.
Best Regards,

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education, training and cultural activities.

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