

## UConn Response to/Preparations for the H1N1 Flu Virus

- **What are the University and the Division of Student Affairs doing?**

The Pandemic Flu Committee is comprised of staff members representing many areas throughout the University. Its membership includes representatives from Student Health Services (SHS), Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Environmental Health and Safety, Public Safety, Human Resources, Attorney General's Office, University Communications, Finance, Facilities, Regional Campus administration, and experts in emergency preparedness and response from the Center for Continuing Studies. This Committee utilizes the University's Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) as its guide. The COOP plan was developed utilizing best practice models for emergency preparedness and operations. This group has met regularly to discuss and plan for many of the issues involved with assuring both the health and safety of the University community, as well as preparing for continuity of operations in the event of high rates of student and employee absenteeism. Some of the issues that have been discussed include the following:

**Medical Care** – developing plans to effectively and efficiently provide the medical care and treatment that will be necessary in an outbreak situation. This is primarily a Student Health Services' function. Currently, SHS is reviewing all Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and "best practices" guidelines to assist in planning, as well as participating in surveillance activities. SHS is also procuring necessary medical supplies and pharmaceutical items.

**Monitoring for Updates** – the SHS has taken primary responsibility for monitoring the most updated information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization, American College Health Association, American Public Health Association, Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), Eastern Highlands Health District and other resources. Additionally, SHS has been a participant in ongoing conference calls with DPH.

**Housing** – plans outlining provisions to house students who have symptoms of the flu and should be isolated from their roommates to avoid spreading the H1N1 virus are being solidified. This area is the responsibility of Residential Life/Housing and Student Affairs. Additionally, there are contingency plans for housing ill students in large venues on a short-term basis should this become necessary. The primary plan for dealing with sick students would be to send them home to their families since approximately 90% of the undergraduate population lives within two hours of campus.

**Food Services** – plans for providing and delivering meals to students who have been isolated to avoid spreading the H1N1 virus. These plans are the responsibility of Dining Services.

**Employee Safety** – plans for keeping our employees safe from exposure to the virus is primarily the responsibility of Environmental Health and Safety. They are

reviewing the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements and will coordinate employee training. Additionally, the Committee is working with Central Stores and Purchasing to stockpile PPE items.

**Human Resource Issues** – Human Resources is taking responsibility for dealing with employee and labor relations issues related to an outbreak.

**Public Safety** – the Police Department and Fire Department (Emergency Medical Services) are involved in the overall planning of managing this potential situation, as well as responding to the safety needs of the University community.

**Vaccination** – it is very likely that there will be a vaccine available in the fall. It has not yet been determined whether it is a one or two dose regimen. Assuming there are ample supplies of vaccine available, college students are considered to be a target group for vaccination. Therefore, Student Health Services is working with the Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Eastern Highlands Health District in planning for mass vaccination clinics. SHS is monitoring the CDC guidelines for this initiative.

**Prevention Activities** – the best line of defense against the spread of the H1N1 virus is the aggressive use of activities to prevent transmission of the H1N1 virus. Student Health Services and Wellness and Prevention Services are taking primary responsibility for these initiatives related to “respiratory etiquette,” proper hand washing, and use of a health communications marketing campaign related to preventive measures to help stop virus transmission. This campaign will include:

Providing information to Residence Hall staff to be posted and disseminated throughout residence halls;

Developing informational materials and disseminating them to off-campus students in conjunction with Off-Campus Student Services;

Infusing prevention messaging into FYE classes;

Identifying opportunities to distribute appropriate preventive materials to incoming students during Week of Welcome (WOW);

Infusing the prevention message into the convocation ceremony;

Assembling and disseminating flu kits which will consist of items such as hand sanitizers, tissues, thermometers, and health information.

Encouraging the availability of hand sanitizers across the campus. Departments will be encouraged to have them available for public use. Dining Services will have them available for sale at the convenience stores.

**Communications** – the SHS website <http://www.shs.UConn.edu/> has become the H1N1 website for the University and all messaging to the community will be centralized for consistency of communications. Additionally, staff from Student Health Services, Wellness and Prevention Services, Public Safety, Communications, Human Resources, and Environmental Health and Safety will develop a message to be sent by the President to the entire community and students will be encouraged to pass the message on to parents.

**Coordination Planning** – the Connecticut Department of Public Health is sponsoring a conference on H1N1 planning for institutions of higher education; and UConn is sending a team including members from Student Health Services, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Environmental Health & Safety, Regional Campus administration, and Human Resources.

- **What can individuals do to protect themselves and others?**

**Practice respiratory etiquette** – cough and sneeze into your arm or elbow or tissues, not into your hands. Stay at least six feet away from others if you or others are coughing or sneezing.

**Practice good hand washing technique** – wash hands often with soap and water, especially after sneezing or a coughing; and sing the “ABC Song” while you wash, to make sure you have washed long enough.

**Use of hand sanitizers** – when soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Purchase a hand sanitizer and carry it with you.

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.**

**Avoid contact with others who are ill.**

**Stay home from work (following established policies and/or contractual guidelines) or school and avoid contact with others if you are ill (self-isolation).** If you live with roommates in a residence hall, consider going home to your family until you have recovered.

**Stay healthy** – get plenty of sleep; exercise appropriately; manage your stress; eat nutritious foods; and drink plenty of liquids.

**Get a yearly flu shot and watch for information about the availability of the H1N1 vaccine.**

**Be prepared** – purchase items that you might need—including a fever thermometer, hand sanitizer, tissues, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, and appropriate food supplies.

**Know the symptoms of the flu** – symptoms of the flu include fever, muscle aches, headache, cough, and runny nose. If you have these symptoms, please consult a healthcare provider and keep your distance from others to protect them from getting infected. Follow your healthcare provider’s advice and/or the University’s H1N1 website to determine when it is safe to return to work or school.

**Stay informed** – for the most up-to-date information about the H1N1 virus, please check UConn’s H1N1 homepage at [http://www.shs.UConn.edu/swine\\_flu.html](http://www.shs.UConn.edu/swine_flu.html)

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