

Dear Parents:

I am writing to share information about Susquehanna's plans for responding to the H1N1 (swine flu) virus and to ask for your help in educating and protecting your student. The close living, learning and working conditions of a college campus require special precautions to minimize the potential spread of this virus.

We are working closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and are complying with all recommendations offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The policies described below are adopted from CDC recommendations.

First and foremost: Students should not come to campus if they are sick.

To protect against the spread of this new influenza strain, we ask that students who are ill with flu-like symptoms not return to campus for the fall semester until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Persons infected with the H1N1 flu virus could possibly infect others one day before exhibiting symptoms and five to seven days after.

What students should do if they think they have the H1N1 Flu.

Symptoms of the H1N1 virus are similar to the seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Students should contact their healthcare provider if they develop these symptoms and the healthcare provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment with antiviral medication is necessary. Students who have been exposed to someone diagnosed with the H1N1 virus do not need to contact a doctor unless they have chronic medical conditions that would increase their risk of developing complications.

What students should do if they develop symptoms on campus.

Students who have flu-like symptoms should call the Health Center.

- Weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.570-372-4385
- After hours and weekends.....570-374-9164

If a student isn't sure symptoms merit contacting the Health Center, he or she should talk it over with an RA, faculty member, coach, work supervisor or public safety officer.

If students call the Health Center after hours, calls will be answered by Evangelical Hospital staff, who will notify the on-call Health Center nurse as quickly as possible. In cases of uncomplicated influenza-like illness, students will be advised to remain "isolated in place" in their room. Health Center personnel will assist the student in coordinating care and in gathering pertinent information about social contacts.

As a parent or guardian, you will be contacted to pick up your student for recovery at home. Students with a suspected case of H1N1 who are unable to return home because of distance or extraordinary circumstances will be placed in empty student living quarters, if available, or in accommodations at 610 University Ave. for the duration of their illness.

Students may return to campus once they recover—at least 24 hours after fever has subsided (without the use of fever-reducing medicine), usually five to seven days after the onset of first symptoms. They should not return until they are well. Their first responsibility is to avoid endangering the health of fellow students, faculty and the rest of the campus community.

What faculty members are considering to minimize flu disruptions.

Faculty members are giving special consideration to structuring their classes in ways that could minimize flu-related disruptions. These include using Blackboard or Moodle to manage classes online, addressing flu contingency plans in course syllabi, posting course materials to e-Res (an electronic online library “reservation” tool), and being prepared for student requests to make up work. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their professors about any illness so that they may keep up with assignments. Students who cannot report for the beginning of the semester should also contact the registrar’s office (570-372-4109) to apprise them of the situation.

What preventative steps students should take to protect themselves from the flu.

Students are encouraged to get the seasonal flu vaccine through their hometown health care provider or at one of the flu clinics that will be held on campus this fall. We also encourage them to get the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. The CDC expects a vaccine to be available this fall, but a shortage is possible initially. If this occurs, the vaccine will be distributed to certain groups first, including college-age students.

But since the availability of a vaccine is uncertain, students should practice certain prevention techniques.

- Cover the nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then promptly and properly dispose of it. If tissues are not available, coughing or sneezing into the crook of the arm or shoulder is recommended.
- Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth.
- Do not share utensils, drinks, food or personal care items.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if sick and limit contact with others.

Finally, we suggest you send your student back to campus with a cold and flu kit containing

- a thermometer,
- acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil),
- cough syrup,
- a supply of fluids such as bottled water, sports drinks and soups,
- hand sanitizer, and
- boxes of tissues.

Please help us keep the Susquehanna community healthy by discussing these flu prevention measures with your student. Working together, we can help protect our community from the spread of pandemic flu and other infectious diseases. For more information, visit the CDC Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>. It is the best source for up-to-date information on the disease. More information on Susquehanna’s response to a potential outbreak can be found at <http://www.susqu.edu/news/26891.asp>.

Sincerely,

Philip E. Winger
Vice President for Student Life & Dean of Students