



Lancaster General College of Nursing & Health Sciences

Emergency Preparedness Plan: H1N1 Flu

Introduction

Because of the very real threat of the H1N1 influenza virus for these fall and winter seasons of 2009/2010, LGCNHS must be prepared for possible disruptions in its courses due to illness among students and faculty. Our overall goal is to implement strategies that limit the number of people who become seriously ill from influenza, while also minimizing disruptions to the educational process and social aspects of our College. The preparations involve considerations at the class, program/division, and institution levels. In addition, consideration must be given in the event of employee (faculty & staff) illness from the flu. Following is a detailed plan that aims to reduce the incidence and spread of the H1N1 virus.

Institutional Level Preparedness (Employee and Student Considerations)

A. Centralization of Efforts

All information and activities specific to the H1N1 virus will be centralized through the **Office of the Coordinator of Health & Counseling Services at the College**. This office will be responsible for the collection of data regarding the number of students, faculty and staff afflicted with flu-like symptoms. These data will serve to inform College Administration and will aid in any institutional decisions made regarding suspension of classes.

B. Communication Efforts

- *Weekly "Shoo the Flu" Reminders* - The Coordinator of Health & Counseling Services will continue to distribute emails containing basic facts to prevent the spread of the virus.
- *Weekly College Emails*- The weekly emails sent to students, faculty and staff will contain reminders about the necessity to "think flu" and take precautions to stay healthy and avoid the spread of contaminants.

- *Letter to Students* – The Coordinator of Health & Counseling Services will prepare and distribute a letter to all students, faculty and staff providing key information relevant to the flu virus.
- A *College website* will be developed where the College community can find current information regarding the H1N1 and College efforts to prevent its spread on our campus.
- *Suspension of Classes* - Decisions affecting suspension of classes will be made by the College Administration. Notification of cancellation of classes will be announced via website, television, and radio announcements following the format used for snow closings.

C. College Attendance Policy

- *Penalty for Missing Scheduled Exam/Quiz:* Any program that currently deducts a percentage of an exam/quiz grade for failing to take the test on the assigned date will no longer do so for **the fall 2009 and spring 2010 semesters only**. This temporary change in policy applies to all students and **is not** limited to absences related to the flu virus. There will be no deduction in a test grade for any absence recorded during the fall 2009 and spring 2010 semesters.
- *24-Hour Testing Policy:* The policy requiring students to take missed examinations or quizzes within 24 hours of their return to class or clinical is also temporarily on hold. This policy will be on hold for **the fall 2009 and spring 2010 semesters only**.
- *Make-up for Clinical Absence:* Policies will vary based upon the requirements of each clinical program. Students are advised to speak with the Program Director of their clinical program for specifics regarding clinical make-up sessions.

D. Sanitation

- Surface and hand wipes have been placed throughout the College buildings and in every classroom and laboratory.
- Special efforts at maintaining the cleanliness of the College have been implemented. All frequent points of hand contact (door handles, light switches, railings) are cleaned on a daily basis.
- Should classes be suspended, special care will be taken to cleanse and sanitize all College buildings.

E. College Operations Departments (Security, Facilities, Finance, Admissions, et)

- Department Vice President/Dean/Director should prepare a contingency plan in the event that employee illness curtails daily operations.

Division / Programmatic Level

A. Communication

- Division/programs will prepare a contingency plan that identifies potential ways to assist or replace faculty who contract the virus. This might involve listing those who could substitute for each faculty member in the case of a health emergency.
- Remind students about good hygiene practices and what to do if they contract flu-like symptoms.

B. Attendance Policy

- Review with students the temporary changes to the College attendance policy.
- Discuss with students how/when make-ups for clinical will take place.

Classroom Level

A. Communication

- Inform students to call their course coordinator to report their illness.
- Faculty is to report each student absence related to flu-like symptoms to the Coordinator of Health & Counseling Services immediately.
- When the student returns to class, faculty is to inform the Coordinator of Health & Counseling Services of the student's return. This will ensure that record keeping remains current.

B. Course Requirements

- In the event that normal classroom activities are disrupted, each faculty member should develop a creative plan utilizing alternative teaching strategies in order to maintain the academic integrity of the lesson plan.
- Faculty must discuss alternate methods of classroom instruction with their appropriate Chair or Dean prior to announcement or implementation of said methods.

Employee-Specific Considerations (including IPD Staff)

A. Communication

- Employees are asked to call their immediate supervisor to report an absence related to flu-like symptoms
- Supervisors are to report each employee absence to the Coordinator of Health & Counseling Services. When the employee returns to work, the supervisor is to notify the Coordinator of Health & Counseling Services to ensure that data collection remains current.

B. School Closing

- Decisions affecting College closings will be made by the College Administration. Notification will be announced via website, television, and radio announcements following the format used for snow closings.
- **Please be advised that suspension of classes does not automatically lead to a decision to close the College.**
- In the event of suspension of classes, all other business activities of the College may continue and employees will be expected to report to work, unless directed otherwise. Employees may choose to take personal time (PTB) if deciding not to report to work as scheduled.
- Should the College be closed, employees will not be required to utilize PTB time as per the College's school closing policy.
- Classes scheduled through IPD will not be affected by a decision to suspend College classes.
- In the event of a College closure, IPD offerings will continue as planned.
- Decisions to suspend IPD classes will be made independent of any College decisions regarding class activities. Suspension of IPD classes/courses will be made by the Director of Continuing Education/Clinical Education and/or the Director of Leadership/Management/Innovation.

C. Guidelines for Returning to Work

- As per CDC recommendations, individuals who present with a fever should refrain from returning to work until they have been fever-free without the use of medications for 24 hours.
- However, as always, follow the directions/instructions from your family physician regarding your return to work.

Flu Vaccinations

- It is strongly advised that employees and students considering receiving flu shots when they become available.