

Response Plan - H1N1 Influenza

UC College of Law

October 2009

The H1N1 virus is causing illness on many college campuses, it is contagious, and it is likely to become worse this winter. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that the H1N1 infection rates may double those of normal years, and may infect as many as 40% of the population.

The University of Cincinnati has assembled helpful information about the flu pandemic, including prevention advice, facts about the flu, and University policies about the flu, at http://www.uc.edu/pubsafety/emergency_services/Swine_Flu.html. The University's policies recognize the goal to keep UC open and its students learning despite disruptions caused by student absenteeism and instructor illness. The University's policies stress that sick members of the community, including students, faculty, and staff, should stay home while suffering with the flu in order to minimize transmission of the virus. Under severe conditions, University officials will make major decisions about emergency preparedness, which could include cancelling classes or cancelling other large gatherings on campus.

University policy requires each college to disseminate necessary information to members of the community within the college, plan for continuation of operations, and take other preparedness steps. This Plan describes the preparedness steps the College of Law has taken to respond to a major outbreak of H1N1 Influenza. Additional important information regarding emergency preparedness that must be shared with the College community will be posted on the University or College websites or sent through email. We thank all members of the College of Law community for cooperating with the directives of this Plan.

Prevention:

The first priority is for members of the University community to protect themselves and others in order to stay healthy. Here are steps recommended by the University to prevent the transmission of the virus:

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle through adequate rest, exercise, nutrition, hydration, and relaxation.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner. Be sure to wash hands after coughing, sneezing, or blowing the nose. Alcohol-based hand cleaners will be placed in many locations around the College.
- Avoid touching the nose, mouth, and eyes. Germs spread readily this way.

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough and sneeze into the elbow. Dispose of tissues in no-touch trash receptacles.
- Keep frequently touched common surfaces clean, such as telephones, keyboards, doorknobs, etc.
- Do not share others' phones, headphones, or other personal items without cleaning them first.
- Don't spread the flu. Flu stricken students, faculty, and staff should stay home. Symptoms of flu include fever (100 degrees F or 38 degrees C), chills, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting. The University is following the CDC recommendations and asking those who are sick to stay home for at least 24 hours after being free of fever (without the use of fever reducing medicines). Seek medical attention if severe symptoms are experienced.
- Get vaccinated. Seasonal flu vaccine is available now through University Health Services. Vaccine for the H1N1 flu is expected to be available beginning in October. Flu vaccinations are offered at the West Campus clinic located in Lindner Center (see <http://www.uc.edu/uhs/westclinic/default.html>).

For Students:

- Students should consider forming "flu buddy groups" in which students agree to get notes and other class information for sick group members. Members of these groups should also agree in advance to check on each other to help with obtaining medical assistance, food, or supplies during a difficult bout with the flu.
- The University is following the CDC recommendations and asking sick students to stay home for at least 24 hours after being free of fever (without the use of fever reducing medicines).
- Students who must miss class due to the flu should notify professors of the absences and the reason for the absences no later than the second day of the absence. Sick students who tell their professors that they are absent because of the flu will not suffer a grade penalty for missing up to 1.5 weeks of class (defined as 10 consecutive days). If students must miss more than 1.5 weeks of class, professors have the discretion to require students to provide doctors' notes to confirm the illnesses in order to avoid grade penalties for excessive absences from class. A doctor providing a note to excuse an absence should not be related to the student. Students can claim flu as the reason for absences for only one series of consecutive absences in any semester.
- If students are given access to podcasts, lecture notes, PowerPoint slides, or other information by professors to assist the students who must miss class due to the

flu, the students must use these sources only for this purpose. Sharing these sources with others outside of the relevant class will be treated as a violation of the Honor Code.

For Faculty:

- The University is following the CDC recommendations and asking faculty members to stay home for at least 24 hours after being free of fever (without the use of fever reducing medicines).
- Faculty members should evaluate their attendance policies and modify them as needed to comply with this Response Plan, and then communicate any changes to their students. Attendance policies should eliminate incentive for students to attend classes when they demonstrate flu symptoms and they could further spread the virus.
- Faculty members should emphasize to students that they must communicate to the faculty member any absence from class due to the flu, and that the students will not be penalized for such absences that last no more than 1.5 weeks (defined as 10 consecutive days). For longer absences, faculty members have the discretion to request that students provide doctors' notes to avoid penalties for missing classes. Such notes should be provided by a doctor who is not related to the student.
- Faculty members should give students guidance on how to make up missed work.
- Faculty members should plan for how to help sick students stay current with materials covered in class. The College has established TWEN courses for all faculty and faculty should consider posting podcasts of their classes, handouts, PowerPoint slides, lecture notes, and other class materials on TWEN for sick students to access from home. The College will provide assistance and training on the use of all of these approaches.
- Where practical, faculty members may consider collaborative efforts with other faculty teaching the same course to cover each other's classes if one or more become ill with the flu.
- If a faculty member must cancel a class because of the flu (or for any other reason), the faculty member should communicate cancellation of their classes promptly and in any event no later than 2 hours before the scheduled start of the cancelled class. Such communication must be done either by calling a designated telephone number or by sending a message to a designated email address. College staff will promptly post the cancellations on a dedicated place on our website so that students and other members of the community will be able easily to identify cancelled classes.

- All cancelled classes must be made up in order to comply with ABA accreditation requirements. Make-up classes should be coordinated with Cheryl Delvecchio, Charlene Carpenter, Toni McGuire, Lori Strait, or Nancy Oliver. Planned make-up classes will be recorded in the master scheduling book located in the Dean's office. Because many make-up classes may be necessary, attention will be given to schedule make-ups only when all students in the class are not scheduled for another class or a previously scheduled make-up. This may necessitate having some make-up classes during evening or weekend hours, during holidays or breaks, or during reading periods. If the College were to experience a very high rate of absences of students or faculty members, the Dean may have to extend the semester to accommodate the need for make-up classes.
- Ask students who appear to be clearly sick to leave the classroom and, if seriously ill, to seek medical attention.

For Employees (Faculty, Staff, and Library):

- The University is following the CDC recommendations and asking sick employees to stay home for at least 24 hours after being free of fever (without the use of fever reducing medicines).
- Personnel policies regarding such things as attendance, sick leave, and clearance to return to work have been established by the University, some of which are altered for the flu season. These policies are described at http://www.uc.edu/pubsafety/emergency_services/Swine_Flu.html.

Regarding Exams:

- If wide-spread illness requires the University to close for a significant time, the semester may need to be extended in order to provide adequate time to administer exams. Any decision to extend the semester will be made by the Dean.
- If staff absences because of the flu leave inadequate numbers of proctors to cover all exams, preference will be given to having proctors administer first-year exams. If the circumstances warrant, the Dean may decide to alter normal exam procedures and notify the College community of such changes. Changes to normal exam procedures may include, without limitation, administering upper-level courses by allowing these students to check out exams and return them to the Registrar without use of proctors. Under all circumstances, students will be bound by the Honor Code while taking exams.
- If circumstances warrant, the Dean may also decide to change the schedule of exams.

- Consistent with the College's normal exam policy, a sick student must obtain a doctor's note (from a doctor not related to the student) that confirms the student's illness in order to delay the date of an exam due to the student's illness with the flu.

Dean as Preparedness Officer

- The Dean (or his designee in his absence) is the Preparedness Officer for the College of Law who may make any other arrangements to protect the health or operations of the College of Law community as may be necessary in the event of a major outbreak of the flu.

This Plan is drawn largely from the policies of UC and other universities.