

H1N1 (Swine Flu) Information and Planning

August 19, 2009

Planning Committee: Dr. Robert Primosch, Dr. Boyd Robinson, Melissa Long and Jean Sweitzer
Communications: Karen Rhodenizer and Sarah Zachrich Jeng

Resources:

UF Information <http://www.ehs.ufl.edu/H1N1/default.asp> (includes self-triage diagram)

UF College of Dentistry Web site <http://www.dental.ufl.edu/Offices/News/2009-flu-information.php> (link also available from Dentistry's home page)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/>

Flu (H1N1, avian and pandemic information) <http://www.flu.gov/>

What are the symptoms of H1N1 (swine) flu?

The symptoms of novel H1N1 flu virus in people include *fever (100°F), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue*. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

Individuals should self-isolate for 24-hours after being fever-free without fever reducing medications. Healthcare workers may be asked to self-isolate longer.

Vaccine availability: It is anticipated that a vaccine for H1N1 will be available in the fall around October. It is expected that pregnant women, individuals under 18 years of age, over 50 years of age and healthcare workers will be in high priority groups for vaccination. Vaccinations for the typical flu should also be available in the fall and will cost \$5 for students and \$25 for faculty and staff.

Primary message to our faculty, staff, students and patients: Protect yourself, other people and the institution's operations by following recommended guidelines.

Patient-specific Information/Actions

- House calls will be used to place reminder calls to patients asking them to reschedule appointments if they are exhibiting flu-like symptoms. Clinical Administration is currently preparing the script for these calls.
- Clinical faculty members are asked to send any patient home if they as a provider have concerns that they may have influenza or flu-like symptoms.
- Sanitizing wipes along with hand sanitizer will be made available in clinics.
- Masks will be made available and should be provided to patients with flu-like illness. This will be done to prevent transmission as they depart from the building, care will not be rendered.
- Faculty, staff and students should be reminded of the importance of wearing masks while providing patient care, especially in light of the respiratory mode of transmission of influenza. They should also be reminded of the importance of hand washing and the use of alcohol-based sanitizers.

Student-related Information/Actions

- The college's existing policy on excused absences for students should suffice for this situation.
- Students should understand that faculty will encourage them to go home or stay home if they are exhibiting symptoms of influenza.
- Students should encourage other students to go home or stay home if they exhibit symptoms.
- Faculty may be able to dismiss students from class or clinical settings if they are exhibiting flu-like symptoms.
- Faculty should be lenient in excusing students from classes, exams, etc. in light of the situation.
- Students will be required to wear gloves in Simulation Laboratory to reduce the spread of flu from shared instruments.

Faculty/staff Information/Actions

- Dr. Phil Barkley, Director, Student Health Care Center will address the Faculty Senate on August 27 regarding swine flu.
- Faculty and staff should understand that it is okay for them to go home or stay home if they (or their children) are exhibiting symptoms of influenza. Supervisors may send faculty or staff home if they are exhibiting flu-like symptoms since those who report to work sick may jeopardize the health of those with which they come in contact and make the situation worse.
- It is anticipated that faculty and staff may be advanced sick leave (if all leave balances are exhausted) to cover absences associated with suspected or confirmed swine flu and will not be required to provide a doctor's excuse. However, this position has not yet been officially communicated by the university.
- More information on the official campus position on swine flu related to employees will follow. Questions about leave balances should be directed to the college HR Office.
- In light of the potential seriousness of disruptions in operations, all faculty and exempt/salaried staff should be encouraged to set up remote desktop so that working from home is possible and efficient. Chairs and program directors should encourage these arrangements.
- In order to prepare for potential critical shortages in terms of labor, chairpersons and supervisors should encourage cross-training as much as possible.