

Flu update to the Northeastern Community 8/27/2009 4:41pm

From: Philomena Mantella, Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Life Stephen Director, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

As the fall semester commences, you are probably aware that seasonal flu and the H1N1 virus (formerly known as Swine Flu) remain a great concern throughout the nation. Northeastern has been actively working with the [Boston Public Health Commission](#), the [Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) to plan for this flu season and reduce the spread of H1N1 virus in our community. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available to us.

The symptoms of the H1N1 virus are similar to those of seasonal influenza, and include fever, sore throat, lethargy, lack of appetite, and coughing. The majority of individuals who contract the flu will not need to seek a doctor's care. You should, however, promptly seek medical attention if you have a medical condition that puts you at increased risk of severe illness from flu, or develop severe symptoms such as increased fever, shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, or inability to take fluids by mouth.

The faculty will be aware that H1N1 and seasonal influenza might interrupt classroom instruction for an unusually large number of students, and will be prepared to provide course material, including make-up examinations and assignments, so that students will not be penalized for short-term absence from class due to influenza.

Prevention remains the simplest and strongest measure to combat the spread of both seasonal influenza and the H1N1 virus. Public health officials and University Health and Counseling Services (UHCS) recommend 4 main ways you may keep from getting sick with the flu or transmitting influenza to others:

1. We **strongly encourage** that all students, faculty, and staff receive the ***seasonal influenza*** vaccine unless otherwise advised by your healthcare provider. UHCS will be hosting various influenza clinics in the fall for students and will provide information about other influenza clinics in the Boston area. The seasonal influenza vaccine will be available in September this year with no supply concerns. UHCS is also working with local health officials in the planning for distribution of the H1N1 vaccine for priority groups.

2. Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

3. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder; not into your hands.

4. If you are sick, stay home for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). If you are taking fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen), be aware that they may mask continuing influenza symptoms. Staying away from others while you are sick can prevent others from getting sick too. Ask a roommate, friend, or family member to check up on you and to bring you food and supplies if needed.

The UHCS website provides current information on prevention, symptoms, care, and community updates on the H1N1 virus and the seasonal influenza virus . The website will announce the dates, times, and sites of UHCS influenza clinics and includes more information on steps to take if you do become ill with influenza.

Sincerely,

Philomena Mantella, Senior Vice President of Enrollment Management and Student Life
Stephen Director, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs