

MEMORANDUM

To: All Students, Faculty, & Staff

From: J. Patrick O'Brien, President

Date: October 9, 2009

RE: H1N1 Flu Season



The flu season is now fully upon us. It is anticipated that the peak for flu in our area will take place in the next two to three weeks, and will stay at peak levels for possibly six weeks thereafter. As I am sure you know, the flu virus can be spread easily from person to person. We are taking steps to minimize spread of the flu virus at West Texas A&M University, but we again need your help to be successful.

First, if you have significant fever and body ache, you may have the flu; so please seek medical attention immediately (the first 24 to 48 hours is critical for diagnosis and treatment). For students, please remember that the Office of Student Medical Services (806-651-3287) is available to help you - they are located in Room #104 of the Virgil Henson Activities Center (VHAC).

We continue to work closely with the state of Texas to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best course of actions to take concerning our institution. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

For now, we are doing everything we can to keep our institution operating at normal levels. Please see the attached reminder and here are a few things you can do to help:

- Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Practice respiratory etiquette by covering 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. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth; germs are spread this way.
- Know the signs and symptoms of the flu, including body aches and a significant fever. Look for possible signs of fever: if you feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, are sweating or shivering.
- Stay home or in your residence hall room if you have the flu or flu-like symptoms. The best practice is to wait at least seven days after the onset of the flu, with at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever, before returning to school or work. This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). Severe flu symptoms may also include cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, chest pain, rapid respirations, cyanosis (bluish skin color), vomiting, diarrhea, or dizziness.
- Talk with Student Medical Services or your health care provider about both the seasonal and H1N1 vaccinations. You should get both vaccines when they become available. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). For more information about priority groups for vaccination, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm.

Furthermore, additional "seasonal" flu shots will be available and administered, in conjunction with Walgreens Pharmacy, on Thursday, October 15 in the Jack B. Kelley (JBK) Student Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. for \$24.99 per shot.

We are hopeful the H1N1 vaccine will be available on campus in the next few weeks. We will notify you of the vaccine's availability when we receive our allocation.

You can find the latest information as it pertains to WTAMU at www.wtamu.edu/flu. To access the most up-to-date information on the flu, please visit www.texasflu.org, www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-232-4636.

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