

Memo to the Morris College community (October 1, 2009)

As we move through the 2009-2010 academic year, we take this opportunity to update you on the H1N1 virus (previously known as the “swine flu”) and to apprise you of the steps Morris College is taking to address the health and safety of our community.

We are in close contact with the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and follow the latest Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and recommendations in regard to the prevention, spread and treatment of the H1N1 virus. Our goal is to prevent and/or reduce the spread of the virus and to develop contingency plans to avoid disruption to our campus.

H1N1 Flu Information:

In June 2009, the World Health Organization declared that the H1N1 flu (swine flu) virus had spread to enough countries to be considered a global pandemic. Calling H1N1 a pandemic does not mean that the disease is deadlier or more severe than before, just that it has spread to more countries.

The new virus spreads just like regular flu. People can pick up germs directly from an infected person or by touching an object a sick person recently touched and then touching their eyes, mouth or nose. DHEC recommends that people get into the habit of washing their hands frequently, even if no one is ill. Infected people can start spreading flu germs up to a day before symptoms start, and continue to spread them for up to seven days after getting sick, according to the CDC.

The overwhelming majority of H1N1 patients experience mild symptoms and make a rapid and full recovery. Most people who have tested positive for H1N1 in South Carolina have reported mild symptoms that are similar to those of seasonal flu. It is uncertain whether the H1N1 virus will remain mild, or whether it will become more severe as it spreads during the fall months.

What we at Morris are doing:

- The Emergency Preparedness Committee meets on a regular basis to discuss the latest updates and plan strategies to protect the Morris community.
- Health Services is distributing educational information via the Web site, e-mail and campus fliers.
- Health Services, in conjunction with the Sumter County Health Department, will be offering the annual seasonal flu vaccine this semester for a nominal fee (or based on ability to pay) and the H1N1 flu vaccine at no cost when it is available, while supplies last.
- The College Physician has applied to be designated as a Point of Distribution for the new H1N1 vaccine and it will be offered for free when it is available.
- The Maintenance staff has distributed hand sanitizers throughout the campus.

- Health Services is implementing a “Wash Your Hands” and other prevention campaigns.
- Health Services is monitoring the demographics of the flu on our campus.

What you can do:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Clean hands thoroughly with soap and water, or cleanse with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer on a regular basis.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Practice good health habits including adequate sleep, eating nutritious food and keeping physically active.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who might be ill.
- Contact the Health Services at 803-934-3256 or your primary care physician if you experience any flu-like symptoms.

Flu survival items you need to have on hand in your residence hall room or home:

- Alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Pain reliever/fever reducer (Tylenol, Advil)
- Cough drops
- Tissues
- Anti-bacterial pump soap in the bathroom
- Disposable thermometer

What you should know if you become ill with flu like symptoms:

Flu Symptoms (source CDC):

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Body Aches
- Headache
- Chills

- Fatigue
- Students who are ill before returning to campus must delay their arrival to campus until at least 24 hours after the fever resolves without the use of fever reducing medications (e.g. Tylenol or ibuprofen). Employees who are ill or become ill with flu symptoms must not report to work until at least 24 hours after the fever resolves without the use of fever reducing medications.
- Students diagnosed with or suspected to have influenza must contact Health Services to initiate going home to recover.
- Students diagnosed with or suspected to have influenza should not attend class or visit the dining hall. Avoid contact with others until at least 24 hours after their fever resolves without the use of fever reducing medications (e.g. Tylenol or ibuprofen).
- Students diagnosed with or suspected to have influenza who cannot go home should wear a surgical mask while in common areas like bathrooms, the common areas of a residence hall, or when in a room with an unaffected individual. Students may obtain masks for use in Health Services or with their respective Hall Directors.
- Students who are well but have a family member or roommate with H1N1 flu can attend classes or visit the dining hall as usual. Students should monitor their health every day. If they become ill, they should go home to recover.

Students and employees who are ill with fever and respiratory symptoms:

- Should call the Health Services' number at 803-934-3256 to schedule an appointment or for advice and instruction.
- Should cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing if they must leave their residence hall or home to seek medical care or other necessities
- Should take all of the antiviral medication as directed.
- Should cover your cough and wash your hands often, even when taking antiviral medications, to prevent spreading influenza to others
- Should take medications for symptom relief as needed for fever and pain such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®), and cough medicine. These medicines do not need to be taken regularly if your symptoms improve.
- Should not take aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) or products that contain aspirin (e.g. bismuth subsalicylate — Pepto Bismol) if they are not 18 years old.

Non-Faculty employees are to follow attendance policy procedures published in the Personnel Employee Handbook.

Follow These Home Care Recommendations:

- Stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.)
- Keep away from others as much as possible. This is to keep from making others sick.
- Drink clear fluids (such as water, broth, sports drinks, electrolyte beverages for infants) to keep from being dehydrated.
- Wash your dishes in dishwasher or with hot soapy water.
- Throw away tissues and other disposable items used by the sick person in the trash. Wash your hands after touching used tissues and similar waste.
- Have everyone in the household wash hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth to stop the spread of germs.

Though we face some uncertainty with the upcoming flu season, please know we will keep the Morris College community informed about the situation. Please contact the Office of Student Affairs or any member of the Health Services staff if you have any questions. Best wishes for a successful academic year.

If you become ill with symptoms of influenza, contact Health Services immediately at 803-934-3256, and limit your contact with others to keep from infecting them. DO NOT ATTEND CLASSES OR TAKE MEALS IN THE DINING HALL.