

Advisory regarding H1N1 flu virus precautions and procedures from President James E. Brenneman

August 26, 2009

Dear members of the Goshen College community,

Another exciting and productive year is about to begin for us. But as we listen to what public health officials say, we also are expecting an increased volume of the flu this year. Because of this, we want you to know the precautions the college has taken in relation to the H1N1 flu virus.

- As of Aug. 26, 2009, we have not had any cases of the H1N1 flu virus at Goshen College, although there have been cases regionally. We are working closely with the Elkhart County Health Department to monitor the situation and possible impacts on us.
- Goshen College has a pandemic flu plan that identifies steps to be taken in response to suspected or confirmed cases of the flu. The plan is under continual review by the Crisis Management Team. The college will act appropriately to minimize the impact of suspected and confirmed cases of the flu on students, faculty, staff, campus visitors and our community.
- Preventative measures have been taken, including the installation of hand sanitizers, the purchase of surgical masks and the distribution of information to promote good health (see attachment).
- The college has identified procedures to isolate students with suspected or confirmed cases of flu and to provide them with food, medicine and class work as needed. Although CDC guidelines do not require a school closure because of isolated cases of H1N1, the college is prepared to close the campus if directed to do so by health officials. At this time though, all classes, programs (including Study-Service Term) and college activities are expected to proceed as scheduled.
- Goshen College administrators will continue to monitor the flu situation and keep the campus community and parents informed about any developments. A three-tier upgraded emergency notification system has been installed to assist with this, and updates will be posted at: www.goshen.edu/emergency.

We also want to provide you with tips for staying healthy and avoiding the flu (see accompanying “Action Steps to Prevent the Spread of Flu”). What to do if you feel sick:

- Anyone with flu symptoms (fever of 100 degrees or higher, cough, runny nose, sore throat) should limit their physical contact with others to slow the spread of the illness and seek appropriate medical assistance. Students who exhibit flu-like symptoms should immediately contact the excellent staff in the **Student Wellness and Health Center**, Room 108 of the Roman Gingerich Recreation-Fitness Center. The center is directed by nurse practitioner Diane White and can be contacted at (574) 535-7474 or health@goshen.edu.
- In case of an after-hours emergency, students should contact their resident director or resident assistant or go directly to the Goshen General Hospital emergency room.
- Parents/family members are encouraged to be in regular contact with their student to remind them to take necessary health precautions and make sure they feel well.
- Faculty and staff with flu symptoms should contact their health care providers.

Goshen College is committed to promoting the health and safety of our entire campus. While we hope and pray for good health and strength, we are taking actions suggested by public health officials to be well prepared for flu-related illness on campus this year. We hope you will take reasonable precautions as well. If you have any questions about how the college is working at addressing these issues, please contact Frank Johnson, Goshen College’s Crisis Management Coordinator, at (574) 535-6110 or fjohnson@goshen.edu.

Action Steps for Students, Faculty and Staff to Prevent the Spread of Flu

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends four main ways to help keep you from getting sick with the flu:

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.

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.

Stay home or at your place of residence if you are sick 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). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). Staying away from others while 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.

Talk to your health care provider to find out if you should be vaccinated for seasonal flu and/or 2009 H1N1 flu. Information about 2009 H1N1 flu vaccination can be found at: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination. Information about seasonal flu vaccine can be found at: www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm.

If flu conditions become more severe, students, faculty, and staff should consider the following steps:

Extend the time you stay home or at your residence to at least 7 days, even if you feel better sooner. If you are still sick after 7 days, continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after your symptoms have completely gone away. Symptoms of flu include fever or chills *and* cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

Prepare for the possibility suspension of classes by planning to continue your work at home (e.g., homework packets, Web-based lessons, phone calls), and find a place where you can stay either by going to your home, home of a relative, or close friend of the family.

For more information:

GC Wellness and Health Center (<http://www.goshen.edu/healthcenter/Home>)

Elkhart County Health Department (<http://www.elkhartcountyhealth.org/>)

Flu information for Indiana (<http://www.in.gov/isdh/24572.htm>)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>)

Contact CDC 24 Hours/Every Day – 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636); TTY: (888) 232-6348

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (<http://www.flu.gov/>)