

26 August 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty, Staff and Students

FROM: Dr. Mark H. Weichold
Dean and CEO

SUBJECT: H1N1 Flu Update

I am writing to update you on the University's proactive efforts to prevent the spread of the H1N1 virus. As I mentioned last week, **the start of the school year and forthcoming cooler weather will contribute to the virus spreading quicker and easier**, and everyone in the University community needs to take steps to guard against getting sick.

The University is finalizing plans for the series of seminars about H1N1 that I announced last week, and in the coming days you will see details, dates and times. These meetings will include question-and-answer sessions about the H1N1 flu, how we can protect ourselves, and how to keep it from spreading. **I encourage everyone to attend at least one of these sessions.**

Also, I have asked Human Resources Services and the Department of Student Affairs to develop reporting processes by which employees and students can advise the University if they have contracted the virus or are suspected to have it. These offices will announce the newly developed protocols in a few days.

I learned today that a Texas A&M at Qatar student is being treated for flu symptoms that are consistent with those of H1N1. This student has not been confirmed to have H1N1, but we do not need confirmation to know that we must take seriously advice about how to protect against H1N1. With the number of students, faculty and staff associated with Texas A&M at Qatar, it is inevitable that a confirmed case will appear among us. I call on each of you right now to engage in proper hygiene practices so that we can be confident that we have done our part to prevent the virus from spreading.

The World Health Organization hygiene reminders for preventing the spread of flu are listed below. If you have any questions or concerns about H1N1, contact Marné Smith (marnesmith@gatar.tamu.edu).

What can I do to protect myself from catching influenza A(H1N1)?

The main route of transmission of the new influenza A(H1N1) virus seems to be similar to seasonal influenza, via droplets that are expelled by speaking, sneezing or coughing. You can prevent getting infected by avoiding close contact with people who show influenza-like symptoms (trying to maintain a distance of about 1 meter if possible) and taking the following measures:

- avoid touching your mouth and nose;
- clean hands thoroughly with soap and water, or cleanse them with an alcohol-based hand rub on a regular basis (especially if touching the mouth and nose, or surfaces that are potentially contaminated);
- avoid close contact with people who might be ill;
- reduce the time spent in crowded settings if possible;
- improve airflow in your living space by opening windows;

- practice good health habits including adequate sleep, eating nutritious food, and keeping physically active.