



August 27, 2009

Dear UNCW parents,

As we begin the fall 2009 semester, influenza-like illness (ILI) is affecting college and university campuses across the nation and beyond. UNC Wilmington is no exception. During these first weeks of the academic year, the Abrons Student Health Center has seen greater numbers of students with flu-like symptoms than is normal for this time of year. Due to concern about the H1N1 virus, I want to provide you an update you about the steps we are taking to ensure the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff.

UNCW has been monitoring the H1N1 flu situation for a number of months, working closely with state and county public health officials and communicating with other campuses within the UNC system to ensure that our response activities are appropriate and effective. We have followed closely the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and recommend their Web site as the best source for up-to-date information.

We have been hearing reports, and you may have heard them as well, that there are “confirmed” or “diagnosed” cases of H1N1 or the “swine flu” here at UNCW. While we do have cases of influenza-like illness, we cannot confirm whether these symptoms are H1N1-related, since the CDC has recommended that health centers no longer test patients to confirm H1N1. This is because, for most people who have no underlying health concerns, H1N1 has proven to be a fairly mild form of the flu, and treatments are the same as for seasonal flu. As such, the CDC has recommended that any patient with ILI symptoms be treated *AS IF* s/he has H1N1; UNCW is following that guideline.

With that in mind, we have provided guidance and health information to our students, faculty and staff in an effort to contain the spread of influenza-like illness on our campus. Our prevention measures have included more frequent cleaning of “high touch” surfaces, increased placement of hand sanitizer across campus and enhanced educational efforts to inform students, faculty and staff about precautionary measures they should take, as well as what they need to do if they become ill.

Students who exhibit an oral temperature of more than 100° F and at least one flu-like symptom have been advised not to go out in public or attend classes. They have been advised to contact the Student Health Center, or during weekends or nights, they may contact Vitaline, a health advice line staffed by registered nurses, at 910.332.8021. Additional treatment may be recommended for people with certain pre-existing health conditions, so a discussion with a healthcare provider is important to determine whether the student needs to be seen.

Students also are urged to call or e-mail instructors to inform them if they have ILI, and to contact the Dean of Students office to request an e-mail from the dean be sent to instructors on their behalf. Faculty members have been asked to exercise leniency with regard to attendance policies for students who notify them that they must miss classes due to flu-like symptoms.

Plans also are in place to provide meals to students who are ill and have campus meal plans. Packages of non-perishable food will be delivered to a student's residence hall room or issued to a student "flu buddy" who will bring the food to them.

Individuals who have the flu are typically not considered contagious after they have been fever-free without medication for 24 hours. The course of symptoms typically runs 3-5 days, so those students diagnosed with flu-like symptoms last week are already back in class and doing well. We also are working to offer the H1N1 vaccine to the campus community as soon as it becomes available.

I hope this information is helpful in outlining the steps UNCW is taking to protect our campus community from the spread of ILI, and to care for our students who become ill. If you have additional questions, please contact the Abrons Student Health Center at 910.962.3280 or UNCW Environmental Health & Safety at 910.962.3057.

Additional information is available at the following Web sites:

UNCW EH&S – H1N1 information site	<a href="http://www.uncw.edu/h1n1flu">www.uncw.edu/h1n1flu</a>
U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC)	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu">www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu</a>
North Carolina Public Health	<a href="http://www.ncpublichealth.com">www.ncpublichealth.com</a>

Sincerely,

Rosemary DePaolo