

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to fall semester! Having moved into the residence halls and the local community this weekend, I am sure you are filled with excitement about the coming semester and meeting many new and old friends. We are excited as well. In addition to your excitement, you may also have some questions and concerns about the flu season. I am writing to bring you up to date on our current situation concerning the Novel H1N1 Influenza virus.

We at UNA have been working closely with the local Health Department to monitor current flu conditions and to make decisions about the best steps to take for our institution. At present, we have had no documented cases of the H1N1 virus among our students this summer. However, I have no doubt that this status will change in the near future. The good news is that the H1N1 influenza virus continues to be relatively minor, in most cases, and a self-limiting one that can be managed with basic home care and over the counter medications for symptoms. This can present a challenge in the residence hall setting, but preparations will be made to assist your student as needed, and in compliance with the Centers for Disease Control Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education. Of course the most desirable scenario is that your student comes home with you while ill, whenever possible. We can provide basic care, but you have the "TLC" (Tender Loving Care) that can make all the difference. For those who cannot go home we will certainly do our best to support them.

We will keep you updated as new information becomes available, including the H1N1 vaccine status. The H1N1 vaccine will be offered on campus, at no cost to the student, as soon as it is available. In addition, the regular seasonal influenza vaccine will be offered to the student at no charge beginning in mid-October. In the meantime, we need your help with practicing these simple guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control for the best and most effective prevention of illness. These are:

- Wash your hands (for at least 20 seconds) with soap and water and/or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and discard in the garbage. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or upper sleeve, not into your hands. Wash your hands!
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as germs are spread this way.
- Stay home if you have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius), flu or flu-like symptoms. Do not return to work or class for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever, without the use of fever reducing medications.
- Stay away from others who are ill.

You will find regular updates posted to the H1N1 Influenza site on the UNA homepage concerning our community and institution. If you have questions or special requirements, please don't hesitate to contact us in Health Services at 256-765-4328. You may also want to visit www.flu.gov for the most up to date information on the flu.

We look forward to a healthy semester with your help. Thank you for choosing UNA!

Sincerely,

Cynthia L. Wood, RN, BSN
Executive Director, University Health Services