



Building Futures ... Together

To: NCTC Students
From: Julie Fenning, Safety Officer
Re: Seasonal Flu and H1N1 Flu Information
Date: September 2, 2009

The nation is facing an outbreak of the seasonal flu and possibly the H1N1 flu. We are working closely with the Minnesota Health Department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our institution. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

As you may know, the flu can be spread easily from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to prevent the spread of flu at NCTC, **but we need your help to accomplish this.**

Here are a few things you can do to help:

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. NCTC will be providing hand sanitizer throughout the campuses. Computers and door handles will be disinfected daily.
- **Practice respiratory etiquette** by covering 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. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth; germs are spread this way.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** 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. A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Signs of fever include: if the person feels very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.
- **Stay home if you have flu or flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever** (100 degrees Fahrenheit) or signs of a fever. This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (ibuprofen or acetaminophen).
- **Talk with your health care providers about whether you should be vaccinated for seasonal flu.** Also if you are at higher risk for flu complications from 2009 H1N1 flu, you should consider getting the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). For more information about priority groups for vaccination, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm.

The Minnesota Department of Health has established a Web site for H1N1 issues which can be found at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/h1n1/>.

2022 Central Ave NE
East Grand Forks, MN 56721
(218) 793-2800 • 1-800-451-3441
TTD: (218) 793-2801

1101 Hwy One East
Thief River Falls, MN 56701
(218) 683-8800 • 1-800-959-6282
TTY: (218) 683-8801

www.northlandcollege.edu

In addition, we encourage you to explore the Center for Disease Control Website, <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> which contains excellent general information on H1N1 and preparation. Individuals with illness or with family members who are ill will find this site particularly helpful.

We are looking at two major phases of the predicted flu outbreak:

Phase One – Seasonal Flu (late August – September)

- Prevention is key. We encourage you to find out if you should get vaccinated against the seasonal flu and/or the 2009 H1N1 flu. You can get the flu shot from your healthcare provider. If you have questions about whether it is appropriate, you should consult a healthcare professional.
- Seasonal flu informational flyers and posters will be posted around the campuses for your information.
- We encourage you to stay home if you are sick. It is important to remain in contact with family and friends if you become ill.
- We encourage you to talk to your instructors regarding planning for absences during this time to minimize the impact on your academic progress.

Phase Two – H1N1 Preparedness (late September – October)

- Recognize that information on H1N1 is changing daily. NCTC will keep up-to-date with local health department and information will be communicated to you through e-mail, NCTC's official means of communication.
- Opportunities that allow for social distancing when possible will be explored and may be implemented which may involve cancellation of activities and events.
- Prevention messages will be reinforced: cover your cough, stay home when sick. These messages are even more important once H1N1 has reached our campuses.
- Information regarding H1N1 vaccine availability will be communicated appropriately.
- If you become ill with H1N1 influenza, make arrangements to travel home. If you are unable to travel, stay in contact with family and friends to ensure your continued well being.
- We encourage you to talk to your instructors regarding planning for absences during this time to minimize the impact on your academic progress.

We will continue to share new information as it becomes available.

c: NCTC Employees