

Eckerd College is Prepared for Pandemic Flu

Information for Parents Autumn Term 2009

As the country prepares for a resurgence of the H1N1 Influenza A (Swine) Flu, Eckerd College is ready. The College has a well-established Emergency Management Pandemic Flu Planning Group dedicated to emergency response planning and implementation. The following are highlights of the College's Pandemic Flu Emergency Operations Plan, which can be accessed through the College's Health Promotion website at www.eckerd.edu/health.

Communication with the Campus Community

The College is committed to providing students, faculty, staff, and parents with updated information on pandemic flu, including strategies for prevention and treatment as provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization, American College Health Association, and State of Florida and Pinellas County Health Officials. In the event of an increase in the number of influenza cases on campus, the College will provide timely updates regarding disease management and response efforts. Communications will be posted on the Eckerd College Health Promotion website and distributed via email. **Parents who wish to be included in the College's Emergency Notification System should provide Anne Wetmore, Director of Student and Family Relations, an updated email address and cell phone number. Anne can be reached at (727) 865-7163 or via email: wetmorac@eckerd.edu.**

Disease Prevention and Treatment

The best way to prevent the spread of influenza is through good hygiene practices, such as frequent hand washing. In 2006, the College launched the EC Clean hygiene campaign. Since then, hand sanitizers and signage promoting healthy habits have been placed throughout campus and educational programs have been and will continue to be offered.

Currently, Centers for Disease Control recommendations state that individuals who experience an influenza-like illness (ILI) should self-isolate (i.e., stay away from others as much as possible) in their dorm room or at home for 7 days after the onset of illness or at least 24 hours after symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer. [On Saturday morning, 8/7/09, parents were updated with the latest information: *Based on current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), individuals experiencing an influenza-like illness (ILI) should self-isolate (i.e. stay away from others as much as possible) in their dorm room or at home until 24 hours after resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.*] **Autumn Term students who experience influenza-like illness should visit Eckerd College Health Services or their own local medical provider as soon as possible after the onset of symptoms.** Based on the fact that, to date, the H1N1 influenza A virus has presented like the seasonal flu, Eckerd College is not planning to isolate ill students in separate facilities or quarantine those who have been exposed to the illness. **It is important for ill students to communicate with their professors by email or telephone regarding class absences and class work as soon as possible.** Eckerd College will continue to be ready to adjust its response as CDC and local health official guidelines change in response to new scientific information about the influenza virus.

Symptoms of ILI are usually sudden and may include fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Individuals who are considered to be at a higher risk for influenza complications, such as pregnant women and individuals with chronic diseases including asthma or diabetes, should contact their healthcare provider immediately if they experience influenza symptoms. All individuals should seek immediate medical attention if they experience these additional symptoms: difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion or severe or persistent vomiting.

Students may seek medical attention at **Eckerd College Health Services** located in Edmundson Hall. Health Services is open for care on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. On Wednesday a medical assistant is available to triage students to other local medical offices. Students are also welcome to visit Health Services' affiliated office, Skyway Family Practice, located at 1100 62nd Avenue South. For more information, please visit the Health Services website at www.eckerd.edu/counselinghealth/health.

Eckerd College is in conversation with the Pinellas County Health Department regarding the distribution of an H1N1 influenza vaccination on campus should one become available this Fall. We will share information with the College community as more information becomes available.

College Operations

Continuity of operations at Eckerd College depends on the health of our students, faculty and staff, which is always of utmost importance. To maintain community health and prevent the spread of illness, the College may need to implement social distancing (such as the suspension of public events) as a key strategy to prevent the spread of pandemic flu. Decisions such as this will involve consultation with local health officials and will be consistent with CDC recommendations. In the event of social distancing, the College will maintain operations as much as possible. In the unlikely event of school closure, classes will continue and coursework will be offered via distance learning.

Pandemic Flu Information and Resources

Eckerd College will rely on information from these sources, and others as they emerge, in formulating the College's response to pandemic flu.

American College Health Association

- http://www.acha.org/info_resources/pandemic_flu.cfm

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- CDC guidance for Institutions of Higher Education http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/guidelines_colleges.htm

Federal Government Pandemic Flu Information Page

- <http://www.flu.gov>

Florida Department of Health

- <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/demo/php/FluInfo.htm>

Pinellas County Department of Health

- <http://www.pinellashealth.com/>

U.S. Department of Education (ED) Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (OSDFS)

- <http://www.edgovblogs.org/duncan/2009/04/public-health-officials-offer-swine-flu-guidance-to-schools/>
- <http://rems.ed.gov/index.cfm?event=PandemicPreparedns4Schools>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

- <http://www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/>

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

- http://www.dhs.gov/xprevprot/programs/editorial_0760.shtm

World Health Organization

- <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>

Questions or comments regarding the College's Pandemic Flu Emergency Operations Plan can be directed to Lisa Mets, Ph.D., Executive Assistant to the President, Vice President for Communications and Chair of the Pandemic Flu Planning Group at (727) 864-8221 or email to metsla@eckerd.edu. Please direct all other health questions or comments to Whitney Wall, MPH, CHES, Director, Office of Health Promotion at (727) 864-8031 or email to wallwa@eckerd.edu.