

September 15, 2009

To staff, faculty and students,

Amid the excitement and activities of the academic year, we want to share the latest information on influenza A (H1N1), which is also known as the "swine flu," and what Olympic College has been doing to prepare for it.

As you may know, the H1N1 flu virus has been receiving a great deal of attention. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO), the H1N1 flu has been getting recognition because it is a flu virus widely present around the world and has spread very quickly. **However, the information currently coming from the CDC and WHO is that the H1N1 flu virus is similar to other flu viruses, causing fever, chills, sore throat and other symptoms.** The exception is the H1N1 virus impacts individuals under 50 years of age more often, especially children and young adults. Some with chronic illness or who are pregnant may also be more susceptible. At the present time, severe illness and other complications from H1N1 virus are rare. While the H1N1 now looks similar to other seasonal flu viruses, we will continue to monitor CDC and public health officials' recommendations very closely. To keep you informed, we will provide regular communications and guidelines on the H1N1 flu as we receive them.

Since the H1N1 flu has expanded so quickly, which may change the severity of the virus later on, we are following CDC and public health guidelines to reduce the virus from spreading. The college will be providing tissues, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer in classrooms, offices, public spaces and other areas. The CDC and public health officials also recommend warding off seasonal flu and the H1N1 virus by following some simple procedures. The attached sheet describes some steps you can take.

In addition to following flu prevention steps, the college is developing plans of action if there are mass absences at the college due to the H1N1 flu. The college will remain open and continue operating unless directed by public health authorities to close due to incidents of H1N1 flu.

For more about the flu, what the institution is doing, and the most up-to-date national, state and local information, visit www.olympic.edu/flu. The college will provide a link to details on H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. Sites for seasonal flu shots will also be listed soon. With your help, we can keep the H1N1 flu bug at bay. Please take steps to stay healthy during this upcoming flu season.

Sincerely,



David C. Mitchell, Ph.D.
President, Olympic College