

September 29, 2009

Dear Students, Faculty, Staff and Parents,

The cold and flu season is upon us as the seasonal flu and the H1N1 (Swine) flu are currently circulating around the United States. Typically the annual outbreak of the flu occurs during late fall through early spring. The H1N1 (Swine) flu virus may cause a more dangerous flu season this year. WMCC is working with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services to monitor flu conditions and to make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our college community/campus. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available to us. As you know, **flu can spread easily from person to person**. If we all work together, we can take steps to prevent the spread of flu at WMCC **but we need your help to accomplish this**.

Here are a few simple things you can do to help:

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **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. A box of tissues can be found in most classrooms on campus.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu and stay home if you have a flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever** (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen). Other symptoms of flu may include chills **and** cough or sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.
- **Get your seasonal flu shot**. In general, anyone who wants to reduce their chances of getting the flu can get vaccinated. 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. Vaccine for the seasonal flu will not prevent H1N1 flu; however, preventing seasonal flu will help to keep you healthy.
- **Find ways to increase social distances** (the space between people) in classrooms such as moving desks farther apart, leaving empty seats between students, holding outdoor classes, and using distance learning methods.

2020 Riverside Drive, Berlin, NH 03570 • 603-752-1113 or 1-800-445-4525 • Fax 603-752-6335
EEO/AA • TTD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964

Accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (N.E.A.S.C.) as a Comprehensive
Community College
Part of the Community College System of New Hampshire

- **Stay home if you are sick.** During severe flu conditions sick people should stay home for at least 7 days, even if they feel better sooner. Those who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away (see above for symptoms). While we encourage students who become ill to stay home, we also want to remind students of their responsibility to notify their faculty prior to missing class whenever possible to ensure that they are aware of new assignments and to develop a plan for completing missed work.

If this year's flu season becomes more severe, WMCC will consult with local and state public health officials regarding any decision to suspend classes. The length of time classes should be suspended will depend on the severity and extent of illness.

For information about flu in our community and what WMCC is doing, visit:
<http://www.wmcc.edu/services/health.html>

For the most up-to-date information on flu, visit www.flu.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636).

Or visit www.dhhs.nh.gov or call 1-888-330-6764.

We will notify you by email and on the WMCC website of any additional changes to our strategy to prevent the spread of flu on our campus.

Sincerely,

Martha P. Laflamme
Vice President of Student Affairs