

August 31, 2009



ST. CATHERINE
UNIVERSITY

Dear Parent of a St. Catherine University Student:

Like colleges and universities across the country, St. Catherine University has been developing plans to respond to the likely appearance of the H1N1 Novel Influenza (swine flu) virus on our campus this Fall and Winter. Since the virus' emergence last Spring, a team of staff and faculty members has been monitoring the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), communicating with colleagues locally and across the country, and meeting regularly to develop our response protocol and communication plans. The following contains information that you as a parent will want to know about the University's planning to date and intended response protocol.

At this point in time no one can predict how severe the H1N1 flu pandemic may become. It is widespread throughout the world, and anticipated to become more prevalent in the Northern Hemisphere as Fall approaches. Fortunately, most cases are mild and effect persons no more seriously than most seasonal flu outbreaks. Unfortunately, however, college-aged young adults are one of the groups most often affected.

We do know that advanced institutional planning will help lessen the impact that a severe pandemic may have on our University community, and personal planning will lower the potential impact on your family. However, even under the best of circumstances, the University may not be able to meet all the medical and housing requirements of our students who become ill. Therefore, St. Kate's encourages you and your family to think about the challenges that you might face, particularly if the pandemic is severe.

Develop a Personal Emergency Plan

To prepare for the likelihood of the appearance of the H1N1 flu virus at St. Kate's, each family is strongly encouraged to develop a personal emergency plan. As you develop this plan, please ask yourself the following questions...

- Does your student have on hand the health care and insurance information s/he may need if s/he becomes ill?
- Does your student have a plan for transportation either home or, if needed, to a health care facility if s/he becomes ill?
- If your student is a resident student and you live outside the metropolitan area, does your student have access to alternate housing in case she/he cannot stay on campus due to severe illness or University closing?
Please note that ill persons will most likely not be allowed to use public transportation such as bus, light rail, or airlines for travel.

What are symptoms of the H1N1 (swine) influenza virus?

Symptoms of influenza-like illness (ILI) include a documented fever greater than 100° F (37.8°C) AND cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. At the present time, the Minnesota Department of Health is testing for H1N1 flu only in those persons requiring hospitalization or those who have underlying health issues. Unfortunately, infection by H1N1 flu may be indistinguishable from infection by other seasonal flu viruses.

How can I help my student avoid and/or be prepared to deal with an influenza-like illness?

- **The CDC and MDH recommend the following in order to avoid contracting or spreading the virus:** wash or sanitize hands frequently throughout the day; avoid touching eyes, mouth or face; cover cough or sneeze with a tissue or sleeve; discard used tissues in a wastebasket; stay home from classes and work if ill; distance yourself from sick persons as much as possible.

- **Have your student receive a normal seasonal flu shot as soon as it becomes available.** The University has ordered a supply of the seasonal flu vaccine, and will notify students as soon as it becomes available. Cost will be approximately \$10. Students may also be vaccinated thru their normal health care provider.
- **Have your student receive the H1N1 vaccine as soon as it becomes available.** The vaccine is expected to be available in late October, when testing has ended and distribution begins. St. Kate's has registered to receive a supply of the vaccine, but it is not known when it will arrive or what amount will be made available to us.
- **Prepare a flu kit to take to school,** including an ample supply of hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, a thermometer, a fever-reducer such as Ibuprofen or Tylenol, tissues and appropriate foods and juices.
- **Make sure your student has on hand copies of the following information:** your family's health clinic and/or primary health care provider's telephone numbers, including after-hours and weekend contact numbers; health insurance information, including policy and group numbers and policy holder's name; your health insurance company's nurse advice line (if provided); telephone or cell numbers where they can reach you or someone else in case they need to be picked up and/or transported home or to a health care facility.
- **If your student has a chronic medical condition,** please have them meet with our Health and Wellness Center staff as early as possible in the semester.

What should my student do if s/he displays symptoms of an influenza-like illness?

- **Students displaying symptoms of an influenza-like illness** should call the St. Catherine University Health and Wellness Center at 651-690-6714 *before* coming to the clinic for a consultation. This will help us lessen the chance of other students becoming infected by the virus. Students may also contact Health and Wellness using a special "H1N1 Hotline" telephone line that will be available once school begins.
- **Following the CDC's most recent recommendations for colleges and universities (8/21/09),** students who display ILI symptoms will be directed to "self-isolate" themselves. For most students, particularly those living in the metropolitan area or within driving distance, this will mean going home and not returning to campus or attending classes until 24 hours after their fever has abated without use of fever-reducing medications.
- Resident students who cannot return to their home will be required to self-isolate themselves within their residence hall room or apartment, and to not attend classes until 24 hours after their fever has abated without use of fever-reducing medications. Dining Services and Residence Life will assist with meal deliveries for such students. Students with chronic medical conditions whose roommate(s) become ill should contact the Health and Wellness Center and Residence Life Office for additional assistance.
- Students should notify the Student Affairs Office and their instructors that they are ill and will be unable to attend classes. Students will be able to do so, day or night, by using an online form that will be available once school begins. Those without access to the internet may do so by contacting the Student Affairs Office at 651.690.6778.
- Students who become ill and experience any of the following warning signs should seek immediate emergency medical care: difficulty breathing or shortness of breath; pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen; sudden dizziness; confusion; severe or persistent vomiting; flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough.

Emergency Contact Information

So that the University can assist students as effectively as possible when they are ill, students are strongly encouraged to provide the University with emergency contact and alternate residential location information. Some students will be asked to provide this information in as many as three different locations:

- All students are asked to provide the University with emergency contact information thru their KateWay account. Students may enter or update their emergency contact information by logging into KateWay, and going to the My Education tab, Banner Self-Service, Personal Information, and then clicking on the Update Emergency Contacts link.
- All resident students will be required to provide current emergency contact and medical information before checking into their on-campus residence hall or apartment. Additionally, resident students who reside outside the metropolitan area and international students will be asked to provide, if it is available, alternate local housing information (such as relatives or friends) that may be utilized in the event of severe illness or

University closing. Such information can also be entered onto the student's emergency contact information page in KateWay as an additional "New Contact" (see instructions above).

- Students who waive the University's health insurance plan will be required to provide emergency contact information as part of the health insurance waiver process (see Health Insurance webpage; deadline for waiver is September 25).

As the school year begins, the University will continue to monitor for the appearance of the H1N1 flu virus on our campuses, and will make recommendations to the President's Cabinet regarding changes in or cancellations of campus activities on the basis of any flu outbreak. Please know that your student's health and well-being is our primary concern, and communication with our students and you as their parents is one of our highest priorities. An effective means of keeping in touch with developments is to regularly access the University's "H1N1 Influenza Update" button located on the front of the St. Kate's homepage (www.stkate.edu).

We hope this information is helpful. Thank you in advance for your efforts to keep all members of the St. Kate's community in good health. Although we can't eliminate the spread of the H1N1 virus, working together we can significantly minimize its reach and overall impact. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have questions.

Sincerely,

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In addition to the information provided above, additional information about the H1N1 Novel influenza virus can be found at the following websites:

General Information and Emergency Planning

www.flu.gov

Center for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu

www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm

Minnesota Department of Health

www.health.state.mn.us

St. Catherine University

Health and Wellness Center

<http://minerva.stkate.edu/offices/administrative/healthwell.nsf/pages/homepage>

Off-Campus Health Care Providers

<http://minerva.stkate.edu/offices/administrative/healthwell.nsf/pages/offcampusresources>