

November 10, 2009

Dear Members of the Siena Community,

In response to your many questions and concerns, I am providing you with the following update:

Current Status of Influenza:

- The Albany County Department of Health reports increased levels of Influenza-like illness (ILI) with widespread cases throughout the county. Pharmacists have reported an increase in over the counter medication sales. Albany County school districts have reported an increase in student absenteeism. Hospitals are experiencing a surge and are faced with looking at alternate care sites. Hospitals have experienced an increase volume of calls looking for the H1N1 vaccine. **The public should know, hospitals do not have the H1N1 vaccine.**
- Nationally and in New York State, the H1N1 influenza virus continues to be the dominant flu virus circulating at this time.
- Siena College Health Service continues to provide a Nursing Station in Hennepin Lounge every day to provide evaluation and treatment of students with complaints of flu and flu-like illness. The hours of this service were decreased to 11-1pm based on the numbers of students utilizing this service.
- Having this temporary service in Hennepin Lounge poses no additional risk to students who live in Hennepin. The H1N1 virus is primarily spread through respiratory droplets. Transmission of the illness through direct contact of a contaminated surface is less than 10%. Facilities staff is sanitizing the lounge before and after the service hours.
- Students with flu or flu-like illness are being placed on a 5 day Medical Leave. Five days is the normal recovery time for this illness. This is a college-wide policy which allows students who are too ill to attend classes and remain in the residence halls to go home to recover from their illness. Additionally, this policy is in place to reduce the spread of illness on campus. Students placed on a Medical leave will have their faculty notified of their absence and their return date. Faculty are in support of this policy and will be working with students to make up any missed work upon their return to campus.
- Students placed on a medical leave are being assisted to make transportation arrangements home within a reasonable time frame. Students are cleared to return to campus by the Health Services staff.
- A small constant volume of ill students are being placed on medical leave and the same number of well students are returning from medical leave weekly.
- The College continues to monitor patterns of student and employee illness on campus. We have not identified any trends in areas of incidence. The number of cases of student illness has not spiked to any significant level to warrant any changes in operation. The College continues to operate under normal conditions.

Facilities staff have increased cleaning efforts to contact surfaces in common areas with a focus on doorknobs, handles, push plates, crashbars. Pedestal mounted hand sanitizing stations have been strategically placed in high traffic areas in various buildings across campus. In addition, permanently wall mounted hand sanitizer dispensers have been placed to augment the efforts of hand washing. Departments are reminded to order desk top hand sanitizer from Shipping and Receiving through fwr@siena.edu as needed.

Flu Vaccine Information

- The Siena College Seasonal Flu Vaccine Clinic is scheduled for this Thursday 11/12, 11am-5pm in the Sarazen Student Union. This is a walk-in clinic. The cost is \$30. Payment is accepted at the time of service. Most insurances are accepted. Students may bill their student account.
- Nationwide distribution of the H1N1 flu vaccine is underway in all states, although it is being produced and distributed slower than predicted. Information regarding the availability of the H1N1 vaccine in our area will be provided to you as it becomes available to us.
- Siena College Health Services has placed an order for H1N1 vaccine for use on campus. Our order continues to be on backorder. We will provide details of a vaccine clinic on campus when our shipment of vaccine arrives.
- It cannot be stressed enough, vaccination offers the best protection against getting sick from influenza, both seasonal and 2009 H1N1 influenza.

Carrie Hogan, MS, ANP
Director of Health Service