

**Informational Update: H1N1 (Swine) Flu  
October 23, 2009**

During the month of October, influenza activity has continued to increase in the U.S. and regionally in New England. Until recently, Rhode Island and Massachusetts lagged behind other states for number of influenza-like illness (ILI) cases. Roger Williams University has likewise had a period of low flu activity to date – we attribute much of that outcome to prevention efforts on the part of individuals across campus.

This week, flu cases have increased in Rhode Island and on campus and the University had its first positive H1N1 culture returned as part of the Rhode Island Department of Health's H1N1 sampling. The R.I. Department of Health has reported that the predominant strain of influenza currently in the community is H1N1. Given this current information, we want to alert the campus community to the likely spread of the flu virus, particularly with the onset of colder weather and subsequent increase in indoor activities.

**H1N1 vaccine** has been approved by the FDA and is expected to be available for Rhode Island college students in December. As soon as we have more information about the availability of the vaccine, we will alert the campus community.

Seasonal flu vaccine is no longer available at Health Service. There are a limited number of seasonal flu vaccines available for staff and faculty at the Wellness Fair on Wednesday, October 28 (pre-registration is required). Seasonal flu vaccine is very limited in the community but remaining doses may be found by conducting a Google search for "Upcoming RI flu clinics." Please note: this information changes daily.

*We remind you again that prevention is key.*

**Proper hygiene etiquette:**

- Cover your cough.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer often.
- Keep your living space and work space clean with disinfectant wipes.
- Avoid overcrowded settings.

**Proper care and self-isolation when ill:**

- See websites listed below for detailed information on proper flu care.
- If you are sick with the flu, we are asking you to isolate yourself at home until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever without the use of fever reducing medications.
- We are encouraging all students to develop an emergency transportation plan in advance to prepare for the possibility that they may need to go home should they become ill. The University will assist students who must stay on campus because air travel would be required to access home care.
- Wear a mask when coming into contact with others.
- If you are unable to go home and must stay on campus, do not go to the dining hall for meals. A sick tray voucher may be obtained from Health Service, RAs, Duty CORE and Public Safety so that a friend can bring your meals to you. Have your "flu buddy," roommate or friend present the sick tray voucher to a dining hall manager. Your friend can pick up the sick tray after they have eaten and are leaving to return to the residence hall.

**If you feel you need to see a health care provider:**

- To avoid unnecessary exposure to yourself and others, and to prevent over-burdening your health care provider's resources, the CDC and R.I. Department of Health recommend that you first call your physician's office to determine the best course of action. If you have mild cold or flu symptoms you may be able to care for yourself at home with rest and over-the-counter medication.
- If you have severe symptoms such as increased fever, shortness of breath, chest pain, pressure, rapid breathing, severe or persistent vomiting, feeling faint or dehydrated, confusion, severe headache, stiff neck, rash, have a medical condition that puts you at increased risk of severe illness from flu, or if your symptoms are lasting longer than a week, you should call your health care provider **immediately** to make an appointment.

**Recommendations for students:**

- Call Health Services at (401) 254-3156 (Monday – Friday, 8:30 – 5:00).
- After-hours and weekends, on-campus students should contact Public Safety at (401) 254-3611.
- After-hours and weekends, off-campus students can call Bristol County Medical Center at (401) 253-8900 (Saturday, 8:00 - 3:00), or a local walk-in clinic.
- For emergencies while off campus dial 911.

**For general information on H1N1, please visit the following web sites:**

- <http://www.health.ri.gov>
- [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)
- [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance\\_homecare.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm)
- [www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm182399.htm](http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm182399.htm)