

To our Faculty and Staff,

The start of the academic year at Salem State College is always an exciting time, as the students return to campus and the “new year” has begun. As you prepare for the coming year at Salem State College, we ask you to consider the effects that the H1N1 “swine” influenza and seasonal flu, may have on the health of our community.

During the past several months, Salem State College (along with the rest of the world) weathered several challenges associated with the H1N1 influenza. The campus gained valuable experience in managing cases of flu and flu-like illnesses in the living and learning environments, and we have updated pandemic contingency and communication plans accordingly. Our Health Services office is providing up-to-date information and services related to prevention, vaccination, treatment, and self-care; this information can be found on our Web site: www.salemstate.edu/flu. We are guided by the latest recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Massachusetts Department of Health, as well as our intimate knowledge of the Salem community.

As we prepare for the next wave of influenza—which will likely include seasonal flu and its H1N1 counterpart—we will need all members of our community to do their part. This includes practicing good personal hygiene and utilizing health care resources in a timely manner.

The campus is planning for a number of scenarios related to the potential resurgence of both strains of influenza. . We will be monitoring our community for symptoms of this illness and are committed to quickly and accurately communicating necessary updates and recommendations. We are asking all members of the campus community—staff, faculty, and students alike—to be prepared and stay informed.

Get vaccinated: The flu vaccine is the best way to reduce the risk of getting the flu. Seasonal flu vaccine will be available early in the fall semester. (Inoculation dates will be forthcoming and available as long as supplies last and there will be a small fee.) We are closely monitoring the development of H1N1 vaccine and will communicate plans as vaccine and associated recommendations become available. You may want to contact your health care provider to inquire about a vaccination.

Make a health kit: Health Services advises all employees to maintain a kit containing a digital thermometer, cold/flu medications (acetaminophen, decongestant, and throat lozenges), tissues, first aid items, hand sanitizers, etc.

Recognize the symptoms: The symptoms of both the new H1N1 flu and seasonal flu are similar. They typically come on suddenly and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. (People with H1N1 may also have diarrhea and vomiting) Generally, people who have the flu are able to

recover with little or no medical intervention, but many employees will have questions, concerns, and need for evaluation and/or care. We encourage you to contact your health care provider if you have any questions.

Follow public health recommendations: To support recovery and protect others, individuals with flu-like illnesses need to stay out of circulation—away from classes, work, dining facilities, and other public spaces—until they have been without a fever for 24 hours (without the use of medications like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) which can mask a fever). Because flu viruses often are transmitted before symptoms are evident, frequent hand washing, caution about touching the face, and covering coughs and sneezes will be essential defenses for everyone.

Register emergency contact information: All members of the Salem State community are asked to provide emergency contact information online at www.salemstate.edu/ems in order to facilitate rapid communication in a variety of emergency situations.

Be aware that health officials may recommend additional measures: Such measures will be recommended if global and national assessments indicate that influenza is causing illness more severe than expected. At Salem State College, we are preparing for just such contingencies and will communicate clearly and quickly as information emerges that might have an impact on members of our community or university functions and/or operations. We hope that you will stay informed about the latest flu-related news and in touch about any concerns that should be addressed. It is important that you regularly check the college's Web site and your Salem State email account.

We have put into place several resources that you can use to get more information:

General information about H1N1, as well as flu prevention, vaccine, treatment, and self-care is available:

- Health Services' Web site: www.salemstate.edu/flu
- By phone at the MA State Flu Hotline: 211
- Massachusetts DPH Web site: www.mass.gov/dph/swineflu
- Centers for Disease Control website: cdc.gov/h1n1flu/

Wishing you good health,

Kimberly Daly, Assistant Director Health Services
Kevin Dougwillo, Director Human Resources and Equal Opportunity