

To the St. Cloud Technical College community,

We write to update you on plans regarding the H1N1 flu virus. Flu can be spread easily from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to prevent the spread of flu and **we need your help to accomplish this.**

Fortunately, the vast majority of cases of H1N1 are mild and, at this point, the virus appears no more virulent or severe than most seasonal flu. This strain does seem to be more frequent in children and young adults. The majority of individuals who contract this virus will not need to seek a doctor's treatment. **Faulty, staff, and students who are ill with flu should remain at home (or in their room) until they have been fever-free for 24 hours** (and without medication that would lower their temperature). If possible, residential students with flu-like illness should return home and avoid public transportation.

For now, we are planning actions to keep our institution operating as usual. The following are recommendations that **everyone** must follow to help our campus prevent the spread of H1N1 virus:

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are 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.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu (defined as fever plus either a cough or sore throat).** A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius. Look for possible signs of fever: if the person feels very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.
- **Stay home if you have flu or flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever** or signs of a fever (have 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). Don't go to class or work. **We encourage faculty/staff to discuss absences with their supervisors and we encourage students to communicate with their instructors if they are staying home with flu symptoms. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) states "do not require a doctor's note to confirm illness".**
- **Faculty should plan for absences during this time so students are not penalized for illness-related absences.** Students, faculty or staff will not be expected to provide doctors' notes for absences. There is no possible way medical clinics will be able to provide this service.

- **Students/Faculty/Staff who become ill should promptly seek medical attention if they have a medical condition that places them at increased risk of influenza-related complications, are concerned about their illness, or develop severe symptoms.** If you are pregnant or if you have a chronic medical condition such as diabetes, cancer, asthma, heart or lung problems, or a weakened immune system, you should consult with your physician to determine if medication or further evaluation is indicated. Severe symptoms include increased fever, shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, rapid respirations, cyanosis (bluish skin color), vomiting, dizziness, or confusion.
- **Talk with your health care providers about whether you should be vaccinated for seasonal and H1N1 flu.** The student flu clinic is scheduled for Monday, September 21 from 10 a.m. to Noon in the SCTC Student Lounge (Pool Room). The employee flu clinic is scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in Room 1-240. 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](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm).

For campus H1N1 flu information and updates, visit the college's web site at <http://www.sctc.edu/news/h1n1-information-and-updates>.

For the most up-to-date information on flu, visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov), or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636). We will continue to post any changes to our college's strategy to prevent the spread of flu on our campus to <http://www.sctc.edu/news/h1n1-information-and-updates>.

Thank you for your help in taking these steps to prevent the spread of flu.