

## Bladen Community College

### Response to H1N1 Pandemic

As you know, the H1N1 virus, commonly referred to as "Swine Flu", was first detected in the US in April 2009 and has become a major health concern for our citizens. Although the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that most people who have become ill with the virus have recovered without medical treatment, it "supports the conclusion that the H1N1 flu caused greater disease burden in people younger than 25 years of age than older people" (Novel H1N1 Flu, August 2009). This virus is contagious and can easily spread from person to person. Vaccines are in clinical trials and are projected to be ready for the public by mid-October. However, it is imperative that we educate our students now on ways to prevent the spread of the infection.

The following steps should be taken to reduce the chance of spreading the virus:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. [Alcohol-based hand cleaners](#) are also effective. Alcohol-based gels should be rubbed into the hands until they are dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, [stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone](#) except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

Symptoms of the H1N1 flu virus include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue, and possible diarrhea and vomiting. Hospitalizations and deaths have occurred as a result of this virus, primarily in those with underlying medical conditions or weakened immune systems.

Please encourage your students to follow these guidelines and work with those students if excessive days are missed due to sickness.

#### Reference

Novel H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) and You (2009). Centers for Disease Control, Retrieved from the World Wide Web at <http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/qa.htm> , on August 28, 2009.