

**HOWARD UNIVERSITY**



**Influenza Response Plan**  
**(Seasonal & H1N1 Influenza)**

September 14, 2009

Howard University  
Washington, DC

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## I. General Overview

The goal of this report is to articulate a unified, comprehensive plan for Howard University in the event that the campus community is subject to an outbreak of seasonal influenza and/or H1N1 “Swine Flu” virus during the academic year.

Provisions contained in this report are for the health, safety and well being of all students, faculty, staff, visitors and members of the general public who come into the campus environment.

Howard University must be prepared for the management of a large number of students, faculty, and staff with symptoms of exposure to highly contagious agents and has established Influenza Response Plan, hereafter (the IRP). The Student Health Center has also adopted a Plan for the Management of Highly Contagious Students, Faculty, and Staff, an infection control plan that will; help to identify, isolate, and treat individuals with symptoms of highly infectious diseases This is a critical part of the IRP. In addition, the IRP will help secure Howard University and its facilities from unnecessary visitors during emergencies and will protect students, faculty, staff, and visitors from potential infectious agents.

The information will be disseminated broadly through the University’s various communication mechanisms including: voice, text alerts, print, electronic, audio and video communications, WHUT-TV, WHUR-FM, WHBC-AM, the Hilltop and other publications as deemed appropriate.

Howard University’s IRP designates four (4) levels of operation. For the purposes of management of highly infectious agents these four levels will be defined as:

- **Level 1** – Normal operations and surveillance
- **Level 2** – Heightened awareness, surveillance, preventive measures and treatment
- **Level 3** – Conditions can be managed with University resources, but may require consideration of cancellation of University activities, classes and/or closure of University facilities and residence halls as deemed appropriate depending upon the size of the infected population and prevailing environmental factors
- **Level 4** – Conditions are overwhelming University resources, a CDC recommendation for pre-emptive class/campus closure has been called. Level 4 operations may be called if a national, city or metropolitan alert is issued.

This plan outlines specific responses to **Levels 2 – 4**.

## **Level 2**

The Influenza Response Team in consultation with the HU Student Health Center will lead the activity associated with this level of operation. As previously stated, this level is characterized by awareness education, surveillance, preventive measures and episodic treatment. Specifically, the following actions will occur:

**Communication and Awareness Education** – University-wide communications detailing the specific health threat, planned actions, prevention and indications for treatment will be distributed. Various campus media will be utilized and may include, but are not limited to email, flyers, postings, text alerts, voice messaging, notification in University publications, as well as on the University’s website. Educational forums will be held throughout the University inclusive of its residence halls, general information sessions, open to the University community, and onsite forums in all schools and colleges. Signs and informational communications will be posted at all University buildings and residence halls campus-wide. Examples of such communications can be found in the Appendices of this document. In addition, specific staff education to prepare for all levels of this plan will also be conducted.

The University staff will be kept up to date on infection control bio-agents and safety protocols through ongoing in-service training. Student Health Center staff and other selected University personnel will be properly trained to detect signs and symptoms of infectious agents through educational updates.

**Surveillance** – the Student Health Center, with the assistance of key stakeholders and select University personnel campus-wide, will be responsible for monitoring and reporting infection activity to the SVP for Health Sciences. Influenza cases involving students residing in University residence halls will also be reported to the Office of the Dean of Residence Life and the Office of the Vice Provost for Student Affairs. Specific procedures for the care of students with flu-like symptoms are contained in this document including indications for confirmatory testing for influenza A as well as testing for H1N1 influenza strain.

**Preventive Measures** – the following preventive measures will be used.

- General Measures include but are not limited to:
  - Good hand hygiene, i.e., frequently washing hands with soap and water or using alcohol based hand sanitizers when soap and water is not available
  - Covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or coughing/sneezing into one’s sleeve, NOT one’s hand
  - Avoid touching the face, nose or mouth with the hands
  - Self isolation when signs/symptoms of flu are present until at least a 24 hour period, absent of fever, have occurred
  - Wiping down community keyboards with disinfecting wipes
  - Sanitizing key contact surfaces such as door handles, railings and other surfaces on a periodic basis to reduce the risk of contamination

- Residence halls
  - Masks, hand sanitizer and wipes should be given to all Community Directors, building managers, and made available to RAs and GAs as needed
  - Common areas should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular schedule
  - Disposable wipes should be provided so that keyboards, remote controls, chairs and railings can be cleansed between users.
  - Flyers and informational posters should be placed near doors and at elevators and other high traffic areas
  - Students living together should frequently clean commonly used surfaces such as doorknobs, refrigerator handles, remote controls, and countertops.
  - Resident students with flu-like symptoms must self-isolate.
    - These students should consider going home if they live close enough to campus and can reach home without using public transportation; otherwise students should stay in their room except when going to the bathroom or to seek medical care.
    - Provisions should be made to provide meals to students that have flu-like symptoms to reduce risk of spread to others, as required
    - Students with flu should wear a mask when leaving their room for any reason or when visitors are in the room.
    - Students with flu-like symptoms will be required to immediately contact the Student Health Center, to have their condition assessed and to receive specific instructions regarding self-isolation and treatment recommendations

**Vaccination** – the following considerations will apply.

An attempt will be made to vaccinate **all** students for seasonal influenza. These vaccinations will occur at the Student Health Center or at “Flu Shot Clinics” organized and conducted at select campus locations. This is contingent upon the availability of seasonal influenza vaccine. At this time the University will vaccinate students for a nominal charge. H1N1 vaccine is not yet available, but will also be made available to students as supplies are secured. Both the seasonal influenza vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine are strongly recommended for those individuals considered to be at **“high risk.”**

Faculty and staff members are strongly encouraged to see their personal health care provider for seasonal flu vaccination and H1N1 vaccination, when the vaccine becomes available. Both the seasonal influenza vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine are strongly recommended for those individuals considered to be at **“high risk.”**

**Those individuals deemed at “high risk” of serious medical complications and illness as a result of contracting influenza include the following:**

- Pregnant women and household contacts
- Caregivers of infants younger than 6 months
- Healthcare and emergency services personnel
- Age 6 – 65 year olds who are at greater risk for influenza related complications secondary to medical conditions (Chronic pulmonary conditions, including asthma); cardiovascular conditions except hypertension; renal disease; hepatic disease; cognitive and neurologic/neuromuscular diseases; hematologic or metabolic disorders, including diabetes mellitus; immunosuppression caused by medications or by human immunodeficiency virus

Individuals affected by any of the conditions listed above should be vaccinated for seasonal influenza and H1N1.

**Treatment** of students with influenza will occur as indicated by the most current Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines to prevent influenza complications. The Student Health Center will be the primary source of care for students. The Student Health Center will work in conjunction with Howard University Hospital (HUH) in instances where the possible severity of influenza onset would necessitate hospitalization or treatment at HUH.

The Student Health Center is the primary source of care for enrolled, financially validated students.

University faculty and staff members are urged to contact their personal primary care physicians at the first signs of flu-like symptoms.

### **Level 3**

A Level 3 response is characterized by influenza infection rates that can be managed with the resources of the University, but may require consideration of the cancellation of campus activities, classes and/or closure of University facilities and residence halls. When deemed appropriate, additional medical assistance from the professional staff of Howard University Hospital will be enlisted.

Response to a Level 3 contingency will be led by the Office of the Senior Vice President for Health Sciences in conjunction with the Student Health Center. **However, all decisions regarding the cancellation of University activities, classes and/or closure of the University or residence halls are vested with the President of the University.** Decisions such as these will be based on the medical recommendations of the Office of the SVP Health Sciences in addition to any other University personnel that the President deems necessary to ensure the health and welfare of the University’s students, faculty and staff. In addition, the following surveillance data will be used in consideration whether or not to suspend campus activities, classes and/or other University operations.

- Number of reported student influenza cases
- Frequency and location of influenza cases
- Seasonal influenza versus H1N1 incidence among reported student cases
- Student, faculty, and staff absenteeism rates
- Number of visits to the campus health service
- Bed availability for student self-isolation
- Severity of illness among affected staff and/or students
- Other information contributing to the campus environment
  - Numbers of and trends in outpatient visits, hospitalizations, and deaths for flu-like illness
  - Percentage of hospitalized patients requiring admission to intensive care units (ICUs)
  - Groups/populations being disproportionately affected
  - Ability of local health care providers and emergency departments to meet increased demand
  - Availability of antiviral drugs, hospital beds, staff, ICU space, and ventilators for flu patients

To further reduce spread of influenza infection on campus, the following procedures will be put into effect:

- **Permit individuals at considered to be at “high-risk” of medical complications or severe illness as a consequence of influenza infection (inclusive of students, faculty, and staff) to stay home when flu is widespread within the campus community.** This would include consideration of implementation of a liberal leave policy for University staff persons and special consideration of leave by affected faculty members through the department chairpersons and Deans of the respective schools/colleges as deemed appropriate. If an influenza outbreak occurs or if the severity increases, people at high risk of influenza complications may consider staying home until the situation mediates. Such “high risk” individuals should make this decision in consultation with their doctor.
- The University would encourage faculty to continue the instructional process to students who may be required to stay home or away from classes through distance learning methods or other alternative electronic teaching methodologies. The University should also examine policy accommodations that might be necessary such as allowing “high-risk” students to withdraw for the semester, administration of the sick leave policies in undergraduate, graduate and professional schools and colleges, where applicable, to address the urgent medical needs of affected students.
- **Increase social distances:** Explore innovative ways to increase the distances between students (for example, moving desks apart or using distance learning methods) reducing contact time. Ideally, there should be at least 6 feet between people at most times.
- **Relocation of well students** away from affected residence hall facilities with abnormally high incidences of influenza viral outbreaks. Recommendations for housing alternatives within residence halls for large numbers of influenza infected students.

- **Campus events:** Consider whether to suspend or modify public events such as lectures, concerts, conferences, sporting events or official ceremonies. Decisions would be made on a case-by-case basis depending upon prevailing environmental conditions.
- **Consideration of suspending classes:** The Office of the President, Office of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer and the Office of the SVP Health Sciences would work closely to balance the risks of influenza outbreak, personal health and safety of students, faculty and staff in the campus community as well as the disruption that suspending classes will cause in both education and the wider community. This would be particularly true if the University would be unable to maintain normal operations due to an outbreak of influenza on campus.

#### **Level 4**

This contingency level would be implemented in the event that University resources that have been overwhelmed and compromised, high influenza infection rates necessitate the closure of the University.

University closure could be mandated due to an abnormally high level of influenza incidence on campus, an abnormally high percentage of faculty, staff and/or students infected; a high percentage of influenza medical complications or mortality relative to the total population within the University community or the metropolitan Washington area, or if national or local officials declare an emergency situation necessitating the closure of schools, businesses and or travel restrictions or quarantine actions are implemented in the metropolitan Washington area.

This would include consideration of shelter-in-place plans and associated service provision for students unable to leave or evacuate from main campus, residence hall facilities. This would also include provision of care for large-scale numbers of influenza-infected students.

To decrease the spread of influenza, the CDC may recommend to the University, a **preemptive class suspension** if the influenza outbreak affects a disproportionate population on the Howard University campus. If a Level 4 emergency is declared, the Student Health Center operations will be assumed by Howard University Hospital under the direction of the Chief Medical Officer. The following actions would be implemented:

- Howard University's Emergency Response plan will be activated.
- The Howard University Hospital Chief Medical Officer and the DC Department of Health will be notified of the need to cancel classes and/or close the University.
- All large events: (i.e.: sporting events, lectures, official ceremonies) will be cancelled or postponed.
- The University's contingency plan for continued essential services such as student meals, residence life, physical facilities management, custodial services, security, and other basic operations for students who remain on campus will be activated.

- When possible, students who can get home – or to the home of a relative, friend of the family, or host family – by private car or taxi will be encouraged to leave campus. International students and others without easy access to alternative housing will stay on campus, but the distance between people will be increased as much as possible. Students affected by influenza will be identified and provided appropriate treatment and support services. Healthy students will also be relocated where possible, to buildings and campus facilities to minimize the possible spread of influenza virus.
- Classes will be suspended for a period of time deemed appropriate for the level of viral outbreak to dissipate.
- The decision to resume classes will be made in collaboration with public health officials and the issuing of an “all clear” notification after a reassessment of the epidemiology of the disease, prevailing conditions on campus and among the constituent populations (faculty, staff and students), and the benefits and consequences of either voluntarily continuing the closure or reopening the University.

## Recommendations to all Howard University Students

### Office of the Senior Vice President of Health Sciences Student Health Center

#### “If You Think You Have the Flu”

- If you think you have the flu, stay at home or in your residence hall **unless** you have one of the conditions listed below and are considered to be at **“high-risk”** **for** possible medical complications due to influenza infection. Those persons should contact the Student Health Center immediately for assessment and evaluation or contact their personal health care provider as soon as possible. **Do Not Wait.**
- Drink plenty of clear fluids such as water, broth, sports drinks, and electrolyte beverages to keep from becoming dehydrated.
- Stay at home or at your place of residence if you are sick, for at least 24 hours after resolution of your fever, or signs of a fever (chills, feeling very warm, sweating, or being flushed). This must be determined without the use of fever reducing medications (ibuprofen containing medications or acetaminophen, or naproxen containing medications). Staying away from others while sick can prevent others from getting sick, too. Symptoms of flu can include fever, chills, cough or sore throat. In addition, symptoms of flu can include runny nose, body aches, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.
- **\*\*If you develop symptoms of shortness of breath, confusion, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, severe or persistent vomiting, sudden dizziness, or fever that is not relieved by fever reducing medications, seek immediate medical attention. Students should immediately contact the Student Health Center or call for emergency assistance.**

- **“High-Risk” Individuals** - Persons with flu like symptoms and one or more of the following criteria should seek medical help right away. Individuals in these categories are considered to be at high risk of medical complications and possible severe illness if they contract the influenza virus. **DO NOT WAIT.**
  - Pregnant women and household contacts
  - Caregivers of infants younger than 6 months
  - Healthcare and emergency services personnel
  - AGE 6 – 65 year olds who are at greater risk for influenza related complications secondary to medical conditions (Chronic pulmonary conditions, including asthma); cardiovascular conditions except hypertension; renal disease; hepatic disease; cognitive and neurologic/neuromuscular diseases; hematologic or metabolic disorders, including diabetes mellitus; immunosuppression caused by medications or by human immunodeficiency virus
  - Age greater than 65
  
- Please call the Student Health Center at (202) 806-7540 during normal business hours, Monday through Friday 8am to 6pm. Again, if you are experiencing flu like symptoms and have one of the conditions listed above, **DO NOT WAIT FOR THE STUDENT HEALTH CENTER TO OPEN.** Seek medical attention immediately.

## Student Health Center

### **Protocol for Students Presenting Flu-like Symptoms**

- Students who think they have the flu should call the HU Student Health Center **prior to** presenting to the Student Health Center for treatment unless they meet the criteria for patients at high risk for influenza complications.
- Students will be phone triaged according to the HU Student Health Center Phone Triage protocol and should follow the instructions given to them by the Student Health Center staff.
- The Student Health Center will keep in contact with all students that have called or reported to the Health Center for care by phone or other means.
- “High risk” students will be advised to report as soon as possible for medical care at the Student Health Center or at Howard University Hospital- Emergency Room when the Student Health Center is closed.
- Roommates/suitemates who are at “high-risk” for influenza complications will be considered for flu prophylaxis (immunizations and other medical treatment)
- Signs will be posted at the entrance to the Student Health Center requesting that all students with flu-like illness put on a mask.
- Masks will be kept at the security desk in the lobby of the building that houses the Student Health Center.
- Signs at the elevator entrance and at the Student Health Center entrance will direct students with flu-like symptoms to a separate entrance to the Student Health Center.
- Students will be placed in an exam room (preferably one containing a HEPA filter) immediately for assessment, examination and possible treatment.
- Students with flu-like illness Will NOT be allowed to sit in the main waiting room

## **Management of Students with Acute Respiratory Syndromes**

### **At the Howard University Student Health Center**

The following guidelines are based on current CDC and World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations for individuals suspected of having infectious respiratory illnesses.

### **Student Intake Procedure**

#### **1. *STUDENTS IN THE WAITING ROOM or TRIAGE AREA***

- a. A rapid Influenza assessment will be done on students who present with fever, cough and/or meet the CDC criteria for the suspected respiratory syndrome.
- b. Suspect or confirmed patients will be separated from the regular patients
- c. Patients will be given a mask and moved directly into a Hepa filter room or quarantine area
- d. Student Health Care workers coming into contact with patients must wear N95 Hepa filter masks.
- e. Strict adherence to Standard, Contact and Airborne Precautions must be observed.
- f. Strict adherence to hand washing must be observed.
- g. Howard University Hospital infection control will be provided with a weekly tally of Influenza infections diagnosed by the Student Health Center.
- h. The Student Health Center will provide the appropriate alerts to the District of Columbia Department of Health, the Office of the SVP Health Sciences, Office of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer and Office of the President.

#### **2. *INFECTED STUDENTS REQUIRING HOSPITAL ADMISSION***

- a. In general, students will be admitted to Howard University Hospital via an expedited admission procedure
- b. Students will be admitted to and transported directly to a Negative pressure Hepa Filter Room
- c. Standard, Contact, and Airborne precautions will be maintained
- d. All health care personnel entering the room will wear gloves and N95 mask.
- e. Infection Control will be notified of the admission.

### ***3. STUDENT HEALTH CENTER EMPLOYEES***

- a. Employees must wear N95 masks and gloves when examining patients with flu-like symptoms
- b. Exclusion from duty is recommended for the employee if fever or respiratory symptoms develop during 7-10 days after exposure to the virus.
- c. Off duty Employees must report exposure and symptoms of illness to their primary care Physicians before reporting to work.

### ***4. VENDORS, PATIENT VISITORS, CONSTRUCTION WORKERS & OTHERS***

- a. If there is an outbreak of an acute infectious respiratory illness in the Metro Area visitors to the Student Health must be restricted.
- b. A system for screening visitors for fever and respiratory symptoms will be in activated.
- c. Public notices will be posted at entrances to the Student Health Center to guide the movement of the public.
- d. Visitor education handouts will be made available to the public.
- e. Entrances and exits to the Student Health Center will be restricted and monitored

### ***5. TUDENT HEALTH CENTER SECURITY***

- a. If there is a widespread outbreak in Metropolitan Area, HU CPD assigned to the Student Health Center location will be issued masks and gloves.
- b. HU CPD will be posted at the entrance at all times
- c. All Employees and visitors must present Identification to gain access to the facility containing the Student Health Center
- d. Visitors must identify at all times the patients they are accompanying so that they can be screened for possible exposure to the acute infectious respiratory illness.

These recommendations are based on current available CDC, WHO and District of Columbia Department of Health guidelines. Information varies depending on the current acute infectious respiratory illness crisis but is the same in the acute care setting for all of the current Influenza guidelines as provided by the WHO and CDC. .

All required Personal Protective equipment (PPE) will be stocked in the Student Health Center.

**Required Personal Protective Equipment**

- ❑ N95 PFR (Particulate Filter Respirator- Duckbilled) fit tested
- ❑ Surgical Masks
- ❑ Gloves

**Required Equipment**

- ❑ Portable Hepa filters

*Adapted from the guidance produced by Angella P. Browne, HUH Infection Control Specialist, September 8, 2009.*

## Student Health Center

### Student Discharge Instructions for Individuals Diagnosed with Influenza Infection

1. Thank you for visiting Howard University Student Health Center. Today you have been diagnosed with Influenza A.
2. **H1N1 influenza is one of many types of Influenza A.** Testing positive for Influenza A does not necessarily mean that you have **H1N1** influenza.
3. **Please provide us with a valid telephone number, as** it is very important that the Student Health Center is able to contact you.
4. This illness should last approximately one week.
5. As for any influenza illness, it is important to:
  - a. Practice good hygiene
    - i. Wash your hand frequently
    - ii. Cover your mouth when coughing by coughing into your elbow or tissue
    - iii. Dispose tissues in the trash
    - iv. Avoid close personal contact such as kissing
    - v. Do not share food or telephones with other people
  - b. Avoid exposing other people
    - i. Remain at home until you are fully recovered
    - ii. Avoid working until your symptoms clear – we will be happy to write you a note for your class and/or work
    - iii. Avoid public places such as school events, churches, shopping centers
    - iv. Avoid travel that involves public transportation such as buses, trains, and planes.
6. **Report to the Howard University Emergency Department or call for emergency assistance if you develop symptoms of shortness of breath, confusion, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, severe or persistent vomiting, sudden dizziness, or fever that is not relieved by fever reducing medications.**
7. Please call your primary care physician prior to going to his/her office to inform them of your Influenza diagnosis.
8. If you live in one of Howard University's residence halls and your home is close to Washington, DC, you may consider going home if you can get there without taking public transportation.

For further information on the Flu you may visit the [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) website.

## **Student Health Center**

### **Indications for Confirmatory Testing for H1N1 Influenza**

(General DC Department of Health Guidelines)

To remain consistent with CDC recommendations and local/regional practice, DC Department of Health will now only conduct laboratory testing and reporting for Novel Influenza A on hospitalized patients with influenza-like illness (ILI), clusters/outbreaks of ILI, deaths due to influenza, and ILI patients at risk for complications.

These changes were enacted, June 27, 2009.

At this time, the same age and risk groups who are at “high risk” for seasonal influenza complications should also be considered at “high risk” for H1N1 influenza complications.

Groups at “high risk” for seasonal influenza complications include:

- Children less than 5 years old;
- Persons aged 65 years or older;
- Children and adolescents (less than 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and who might be at risk for experiencing Reye syndrome after influenza virus infection;
- Pregnant women;
- Adults and children who have chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, hepatic, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders;
- Adults and children who have immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV);
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.

Please use the attached updated microbiology and virology testing request form effective June 26, 2009.

Thank you for your continued partnership and cooperation.

Should you have questions or need further assistance please contact one of the following:

Laboratory: 202-741-7700

Epidemiology Disease Surveillance and Investigation: 202-671-0692

Department of Health: 202-671-4222.