August 28, 2017

Dear Howard University Community,

Last night, at approximately 8 p.m., students in the Howard Plaza Towers West were displaced from 16 units as a result of a fire. The fire triggered a notification to the fire department and activated the sprinkler system in the unit where the fire originated. The fire was contained in the unit where it originated. Thus, the building was evacuated until the District of Columbia Fire Department (DCFD) and the Department of Public Safety inspected the damage and determined it safe to re-enter.

The affected students were relocated to Burr gymnasium where they were met by Dr. Frederick and other University officials. At approximately 11 p.m., all students were allowed back into their rooms.

DCFD is in the process of investigating the source of the fire. Early reports indicate the incident was caused by a grease fire that originated in the kitchenette area in one of the affected units.

Luckily, no students were harmed during this incident, it is important that everyone understands the part they play in campus and dorm fire prevention and safety.
Students should take the following steps when thinking about fire safety:

- When the smoke alarm or fire alarm sounds, get out of the building quickly and stay out
- During a power outage, use a flashlight
- Cook only where it is permitted
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking
- Cook only when you are alert, not sleepy or drowsy from medicine or alcohol
- Check your school’s rules before using electrical appliances in your room
- Use a surge protector for your computer and plug the protector directly into an outlet

We all play a role in ensuring that our community is safe. We appreciate your cooperation and attention.

Excellence in Truth and Service,

Wayne A. I. Frederick, M.D., MBA
President