

NWACC Pandemic Response Team releases update on H1N1 Flu Update 2 – May 6, 2009

This is an update about the status of the H1N1 flu. The World Health Organization (WHO) still has the level of alert set at Phase 5 and may go to Phase 6 if the flu continues to spread. However, the severity of this flu has not reached the levels that were feared, which is great news. The severity of the H1N1 flu appears to be similar to that of the normal flu, which is bad enough and has caused fatalities.

There are still NO documented H1N1 flu cases in Arkansas. However, cases will likely develop as they have already occurred in nearly 40 states. The NWACC Pandemic Response Team will continue to monitor the State Health Department's Web page and other sources of information. It has been noticed that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is now recommending that large facilities, such as schools and colleges, isolate those people who have this flu by having them stay away from the facility rather than having the facility shut down. It seems that this flu is going to spread and shutting down facilities may or may not prevent this. The emphasis now seems to be shifting to the prevention of a further outbreak of this flu during the flu season next winter. Here is a summary of NWACC's current actions:

1) Communication and Preventing the Spread of the Flu:

a. At this time, we believe NWACC is taking the appropriate actions by communicating in various ways to employees and students the need to wash hands, cover coughs, get medical assistance, and stay at home if one has the flu. Extra hand washing/sanitizing stations have been installed in various places on the campus and in centers. We plan to continue doing this for the foreseeable future until more information is available. Thanks to all who worked hard on short notice to accomplish these actions.

b. Also, the graduation planning team will have hand washing stations at the Hammonds Center Friday night and signs encouraging people to do that which is an excellent precaution.

2) Planning for Contingencies:

We may still need to activate plans for the continuation of college operations with many employees away sick from the flu, but that does not appear likely at this time. At this time, just hold on to what you have done and you will be advised further as necessary.