

Dear Colleagues:

As you are undoubtedly aware, there has been a great deal of recent media coverage about the preparations being made by school and college campuses nationwide in anticipation of an outbreak of H1N1 (swine) flu this fall. At Southern, an action plan is already in place guided by the advisories for higher education institutions issued by the federal Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Available online at: www.flu.gov/plan/school/higheredguidance.html, the CDC advisories detail a number of strategies that can be enacted if incidences of H1N1 escalate on our campus. We are also working closely with the health departments of the State of Connecticut and City of New Haven to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our university. In the next few days, the Provost will be sending a memo to faculty and other academic personnel about the university's specific strategies for handling classes and student absences due to illness from the H1N1 flu.

In these early stages, our focus is on preventative measures. As you know, flu can be spread easily from person to person. Therefore, we are asking that each of you take steps to inhibit the spread of flu at Southern. Here are a few practical things you can do to help:

- Practice good hand hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water especially after coughing or sneezing. Please use the alcohol-based hand cleaners that will be located throughout campus.
- If you have flu symptoms the best place for you to be is at home receiving consultation and treatment from your family physician. If you are ill, you should limit your interactions with others until at least 24 hours after you no longer display fever symptoms without the aid of medication. And, if you are at home recovering from the flu, please remember to call your supervisor and the human resources office (392-5567), so that we can track the number of cases and project the potential impact on campus.
- Talk with your health care providers about whether you should receive a seasonal flu vaccine. This vaccine should be available in mid-September. And, if you are at greater risk for flu complications from H1N1 flu, you should consider getting the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available (projections are for mid-to-late October). For more information, or for general questions about H1N1 flu, call the University Health and Wellness Center at 392-8FLU.

As recommendations are frequently being revised, members of the Southern community are advised to visit www.southernct.edu/healthservices for information on prevention, self care, treatment and the status of local and national efforts to address the spread of H1N1. As we begin the new semester, the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff are paramount. I urge everyone to employ common sense and take appropriate precautions so everyone can have an educationally productive semester.

Dr. Cheryl J. Norton
President