

Dear members of the Southern community,

Late Wednesday, I was informed that a residential student from Neff Hall had become the first person on campus to be infected with a confirmed case of the H1N1 virus. The student took the appropriate action – when she started feeling ill with flu-like symptoms, she went home, consulted her family physician and is now staying at home until the effects of the flu wear off. As you know, removing yourself from your social setting, isolating yourself from others and practicing good hygiene are the most effective means to inhibit the spread of the virus.

Fortunately, this is a strain to be respected rather than feared, as it produces a mild to moderate flu for most individuals. In Connecticut, 26 new cases of H1N1 were reported in the month of August, raising the total to almost 2,000 cases. Health experts believe that the transmission rate of H1N1 will increase as we move deeper into the fall. This week, more than 70 percent of universities across the country reported to the American College Health Association that they have experienced H1N1 cases among their students.

At Southern, an action plan has been in place since last April, when the H1N1 virus began to appear in the state. Guided by advisories for higher education institutions issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), we have a number of strategies available to us that can be quickly 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 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. As I stated in my e-mailed letter to campus last Friday, practical things that you can do to help include the following:

- 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 are located throughout campus. Also, cover your coughs and sneezes with your sleeve, rather than your hands.
- If you have flu symptoms, stay or go home, if at all possible. That is the best place for you to be, to receive 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.
- Talk with your health care providers about whether you should receive a seasonal flu vaccine. At the present time, we expect that the seasonal flu vaccine will be available in late September. As soon as it is available, we will hold seasonal flu vaccination clinics, on campus for student, faculty and staff.
- If you have any of the health compromising conditions outlined by the CDC (e.g. diabetes, asthma, any immune compromising condition, neurologic disease, or pregnancy), you should consider getting the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available and discuss this with your physician. Governor Rell will announce today Connecticut's

plan for the distribution of the H1N1 vaccine, which is scheduled to be released by the federal government to each of the states in the next few days.

We will be tracking the number of H1N1 cases at Southern to help us assess the potential impact on campus and any resulting measures that may need to be taken.

- **If you are a member of the faculty or staff and** you are at home recovering from H1N1-like symptoms, please remember to call your supervisor and Human Resources Assistant Francesca Poole at 392-5059 or 392-5567.

- **If you are a student** at home recovering from H1N1-like symptoms, you should
 - Contact each of your faculty members, via e-mail, to let them know and to make appropriate arrangements for completing any missed academic work, **and**

 - Contact 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.

I will continue to update you as new developments occur. As we begin the academic year, the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff are paramount. I urge everyone to employ common sense and take appropriate precautions. By working together and acting responsibly, we can help limit the spread of H1N1 on campus and ensure that everyone has an educationally productive semester.

Dr. Cheryl J. Norton
President