

Handling Communicable Disease Update

Due to the recent flu outbreaks in the United States, Human Resources would like to provide you with some information on protocol for handling potential cases of influenza.

If you are a manager, and you have specific questions or concerns about an employee, please contact Human Resources or Employee Relations at 1-312-362-8500. Some general Q&As for Managers are shown below.

GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS ON PROTOCOL FOR POTENTIAL FLU CASES

QUESTIONS FROM STAFF:

#1 Q: Will there be flu shots offered at the Health Faire this year?

A: The annual Health Faire will be held on October 6th and 7th, and free seasonal flu shots will be available for all DePaul benefits eligible employees. E-mail notifications and Newsline articles will be distributed during September with more details about the Health Faire and pre-registration for flu shots. Please note: these flu shots are for the seasonal flu, and will not protect against the H1N1 virus. A separate H1N1 vaccine is not expected to be available until later in October, and will be made available by the federal government to the highest risk groups first. If you are in a category considered to be high risk for the H1N1 flu, you should consult with your regular health care provider regarding the H1N1 vaccine. Visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website at <http://www.cdc.gov> for more information about high risk groups and the availability of the H1N1 vaccine.

#2 Q: I have an employee who is concerned about getting sick. How do I handle his/her concerns?

A: Provide the employee with resources to answer his/her questions, such as the CDC or World Health Organization Web sites (<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> or <http://www.who.int/en/>). DePaul's Employee Assistance Program, Perspectives, also offers resources to employees to handle stress and work/life issues related to pandemic concerns (<http://www.perspectivesltd.com/>. User name = DEP500, Password = perspectives).

#3 Q: One of my employees called in sick with flu-like symptoms. How much can I ask him/her about the symptoms?

A: A manager cannot ask an employee about symptoms, but should inform him/her about sick leave and refer the employee to DePaul's sick leave policy (<http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=280>).

#4 Q: When should I notify my manager about a large number of absences within my group or department?

A: You should escalate your concerns to your manager, VP, or Dean, if you notice a pattern of absenteeism or a high rate of illness within your department or business unit. It is difficult to track the true number of possible flu cases due to privacy laws, and because exempt employees do not specifically record sick time in the Time and Labor system. Therefore, you should keep your leadership team informed if you notice a pattern or higher than normal incidence of absence/illness.

#5 Q: How do I handle questions from other employees regarding a colleague who is sick?

A: Refrain from discussion about any employee who may be perceived as sick, regardless of whether they are confirmed to have the flu, because employee health issues are regulated by privacy laws.

- #6 Q: How do I handle concerns from employees about a colleague who has been in contact with someone with the flu?**
A: Provide the employees who are concerned about any potential exposure with resources to answer his/her questions, such as the CDC or World Health Organization Web sites (<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/> or <http://www.who.int/en/>). The Employee Assistance Program, Perspectives, also offers resources to employees to handle stress and work/life issues related to pandemic concerns (<http://www.perspectivesltd.com/>. User name = DEP500, Password = perspectives). Employees may use accrued vacation time or floating holidays to stay home if they are concerned. Refer employees to DePaul's sick leave policy (<http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=280>) and vacation time policy (<http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=204>).
- #7 Q: I have an employee who came into work, but looks ill and is exhibiting symptoms of the flu. What should I do?**
A: As in any situation in which an employee is ill at work, you may recommend that the employee go home. You may suggest that the employee seek medical attention from his/her health care provider. This employee would record time out of the office as sick time, as they would normally.
- #8 Q: Does the employee use sick or vacation time during the absence?**
A: A full-time exempt employee would use sick time, which is not recorded in the time reporting system. A full-time non-exempt employee would use accrued sick time, and then accrued vacation time or floating holiday time, all of which should be recorded appropriately in the time system. A part-time employee would use unpaid time off.
- #9 Q: If the employee is out for longer than 3 days, does the normal process of applying for a leave of absence apply and would it be covered under FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act)?**
A: The FMLA may apply, and the employee should contact the Reed Group for instructions (1-866-302-2378). More details about the process are available at https://hr.depaul.edu/Benefits/Health_Welfare/Leave/serious.html.
- #10 Q: How long should an employee stay home if they have the flu (i.e. is there a quarantine period)?**
A: The employee should use good judgment, and consult with his/her health care provider, to determine when to return to work. Generally, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that employees should stay home until they are fever-free without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours.
- #11 Q: Can the employee make arrangements to work from home during the time period they are home sick?**
A: No, if an employee is home sick, he/she should be managing his/her illness and recuperating.
- #12 Q: My employee has a family member who has the flu or has had recent contact with someone who has been infected. How long can the employee stay home to care for the family member?**
A: Employees may use up to 5 days of their accrued sick time to care for an ill family member. FMLA may apply in this situation and the employee should contact the Reed Group for instructions (1-866-302-2378). More details about the process are available at (https://hr.depaul.edu/Benefits/Health_Welfare/Leave/family.html).
- #13 Q: I have an employee whose attendance has been an issue, who is calling in sick due to the flu. Can I take disciplinary action?**
A: You should consult with Employee Relations (1-312-362-8500) prior to taking action in this situation.

QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY:

- #14 Q: I have students who have questions and concerns. To whom should I direct them?**
A: Anyone with student concerns should be directed to DePaul's home page website (<http://www.depaul.edu/campusNotice.asp>) for the most up to date information. If they want to speak to someone in person they should be directed to the Dean of Student's Office.
- #15 Q: I have an unusually large number of students absent from class. If I suspect it is due to the flu, who should I contact?**
A: If you notice an unusual pattern of absenteeism, you should notify your Dean or the Dean of Student's Office. Since confirmation whether someone has the actual H1N1 virus depends on specific testing, it is difficult to ascertain how many cases of illness are truly H1N1. It is imperative that any unusual patterns of absence or high incidence of illness are carefully monitored by the University.
- #16 Q: One of my students (or other close friend or family member) is ill and I have had contact with him/her. Should I stay home and avoid contact with other faculty and students?**
A: Use good judgment. If you are exhibiting any symptoms or feeling ill, you should stay home.
- #17 Q: If I do not feel well or I am unable to work, who should I contact or does the standard protocol apply?**
A: If you are ill, please communicate with your College Dean and/or Department Chair. If you have questions about the leave of absence process, more details are available at <https://oaa.depaul.edu/content/what/documents/FacultyBenefits.pdf>.