



August 28, 2009

Dear Student Members of the Skidmore Community,

We at Skidmore are continuing to monitor the status of the Novel H1N1 (swine) Flu virus. In preparation for your return to campus, we want to let you know the steps we have taken and give you information that will help with your planning. While currently there is no reason for concern, we have developed contingency plans to assist us in a coordinated response to any shift in the H1N1 status. The Skidmore Emergency Management Team has met throughout the summer to ensure that we are prepared to address the health and safety concerns of our community.

Update on Novel H1N1 (swine) Flu

- Novel H1N1 (swine) Flu, which the international health community has been tracking since its emergence in April 2009, was officially declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on June 11, 2009. The organization has advanced its alert status to phase 6—the highest status it can declare. The WHO announcement does not mean that the virus is more lethal but only that further spread is considered inevitable.
- Skidmore's Health Services and Campus Safety offices have been closely monitoring the status of Novel H1N1 Flu as information has been provided by various public health agencies. The local H1N1 flu situation has not changed significantly since June, when two confirmed cases of H1N1 were reported at schools in Saratoga County. Neither case resulted in cancellation of classes or other events.
- Although there is no vaccine available right now to protect against Novel H1N1 Flu, the latest report is that a vaccine will be available on a priority basis beginning in October 2009.
- The Centers for Disease Control and the New York State Department of Health are developing a priority list for vaccinations. We will share and adhere to those recommendations once they are announced and clinics have been scheduled.
- The case definition for Novel H1N1 Flu in humans continues to be an acute respiratory illness (runny nose, deep cough, sore throat), an oral temperature of 100 degrees F or higher, chills, headache and body aches.

What you should do

At this time, there is no plan to cancel or delay the beginning of classes or any activities scheduled early in the fall semester. Following the good health habits listed here will help you to prevent the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses so that you will be healthy as you transition to campus:

- Provide the [Residential Life](#) Office with two geographically diverse addresses.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Clean your hands often. Alcohol-based hand cleaners/sanitizers may be used.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth after touching something that may have been contaminated to help prevent the spread of germs.
- Practice other good health habits: get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.
- Get a seasonal flu shot as soon as the vaccine becomes available. Skidmore College Health Services will be offering seasonal flu vaccine for \$20 per injection. Please look for Health Services email notices in mid- to late September announcing the availability of flu shots to students.
- Skidmore students who are studying off campus should follow health recommendations presented by their program providers and local authorities regarding H1N1 developments. Please visit Skidmore's [Off-Campus Study and Exchange](#) web site and the [Centers for Disease Control/Travel](#) for health information updates for students studying off campus.

What you should do if you are sick before school begins

If you become ill with Novel H1N1 Flu or experience acute flu-like symptoms before your return to campus, please plan to do the following:

- Stay home when you are sick and see your health-care provider.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to help prevent others around you from becoming ill.
- Contact the Dean of Studies Office (518-580-5720) so that your professors can be informed of your delay and can coordinate the process for sending course assignments.
- If you are living on campus, contact the Residential Life Office (518-580-5765) to alert the staff of your delayed return to classes.

What you should do if you become ill after you return to campus

If you become ill with flu-like symptoms while you are on campus, please consider the following recommendations:

- Stay home when you are sick. If possible, remain at home or in your residence hall room except to seek medical/health care. Avoid going to classes, work, errands, the dining hall/restaurants, and social events while you are sick. You will be helping to prevent others from catching your illness.
- Call Health Services (518-580-5550) to report your illness.

- The majority of individuals who contract a flu-like illness do not need to see a health-care provider for treatment. For mild symptoms, you can care for yourself by doing the following:
 - Rest
 - Drink plenty of fluids (water, fruit juices)
 - Take fever-reducing medicines (Tylenol, ibuprofen) as directed
 - For further information, please visit the [Health Services](#) web site or call the Health Services office at 518-580-5550.
- If self-care measures are not effective and/or you feel you need further evaluation, go to Health Services (1st floor Jonsson Tower).
- For severe symptoms, seek care at Health Services, the local urgent care center or hospital emergency department.
- Avoid close contact. When you are sick, keep your distance (at least six feet) from others to protect them from getting sick, too. If close contact cannot be avoided, it is advisable to wear a paper surgical mask (available from Health Services), if tolerable, when you are around other people.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing to prevent others around you from becoming ill.
- Although general testing for influenza may be available, you will most likely not be tested for Novel H1N1. Current CDC recommendations are that specific testing for H1N1 virus, which requires technology not widely available, be prioritized for individuals with severe illness requiring hospitalization and for those at highest risk of complications from influenza. Therefore, specific testing is currently being done on a priority basis only, in accordance with New York State Department of Health/Saratoga County Health Department guidance.

What to do if your roommate becomes sick

- You should limit contact with your sick roommate and try to maintain a distance of six feet from him or her.
- If close contact cannot be avoided, encourage your sick roommate to wear a paper surgical mask (available from Health Services), if tolerable, when he or she is around you and other people.
- Clean commonly touched surfaces frequently.
- Wash your hands often, using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers, especially after you touch the sick person or handle used tissues or laundry.
- Monitor yourself for flu symptoms and contact Health Services (518-580-5550) if symptoms occur.

What Skidmore College is doing

- The Emergency Management Team has met throughout the summer in preparation for a possible outbreak and continues to monitor the situation.
- In an effort to help prevent the spread of germs, we will have hand-sanitizing stations at campus events during Orientation and Convocation.
- Health Services will offer seasonal influenza vaccine clinics and will work with local health officials to offer the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available.
- We have created a web page linked from the Skidmore home page where [status reports](#) will be updated.
- A decision to suspend classes at Skidmore would be made following consultation with local and state public-health officials. The length of a class suspension would depend upon a variety of factors including the severity and extent of illness and the overall best interests of the College community.

For More Information

- [Skidmore website](#)
- [Center for Disease Control](#)
- [US Government H1N1, Avian and Pandemic Flu information](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [NYS Department of Health](#)

We will keep you updated with information about the status of the H1N1 influenza virus. We hope that you have a healthy and happy end of the summer. We are looking forward to your return to campus.

Sincerely,

W. Rochelle Calhoun
Dean of Student Affairs
and Chair, Emergency Management Team