

## **Western State College of Colorado H1N1 Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. I think I/ my son or daughter has flu and school is in session.**

- a. During office hours, please call the WSC Campus Health Center, 104 Tomichi Hall, for an appointment (970.943.2707). Students are advised to call early. The health center is open at 9:00 AM.
- b. Students 18 years and older must sign a release of medical information before we can legally speak to their parents regarding their medical condition.
- c. If after hours or on weekends, seek alternate care sites in the Gunnison community. Obviously, individuals are responsible for payment at facilities off campus. In case of emergency, on-campus students should call Campus Security at **970.209.1020** and students off campus should call the **Gunnison Valley Hospital Emergency Room, 970.641.1456.**

### **2. I/ my son or daughter has been diagnosed with the flu or influenza like illness.**

- a. Please take medications as prescribed. If prescribed Tamiflu or other antivirals, start them immediately. Tamiflu is typically prescribed if the patient is evaluated within 48 hours of onset of symptoms. Please review the patient self care instructions available from the Campus Health Center staff. This includes guidelines about taking fever reducing medications, hydration and rest. Self isolation is recommended to slow the transmission of disease to others.
- b. Absence verification memos are available at the Office of Student Affairs (221 Taylor Hall, 970.943.2011) for school and work. Please notify your professor and/or employer if you have been diagnosed with an influenza like illness. Current CDC recommendations are that patients should be without fever for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducers like Tylenol or Ibuprofen prior to returning to work or school.
- c. We advise those with flu to identify and ask a friend to serve as his or her "Flu Buddy".

#### **YOUR FLU BUDDY SHOULD BE:**

1. *Available to check on you.*
2. *Someone that could assist with getting you food, medications, etc.*
3. *Someone who can help you disinfect common living areas as needed.*
4. *Someone your health care provider can contact for follow-up if you cannot be reached via phone.*
5. *Someone that could call your health care provider, if concerns arise.*
6. *Someone that could help you obtain assignments for missed classes.*

### **3. I/ my son or daughter has the flu and has gotten worse.**

- a. If previously treated at the Campus Health Center for this illness please call to speak to the health care provider. After hours, if immediate attention is needed seek care at an alternate care location. Students on-campus call Campus Security at **970.209.1020** and students off campus should call the **Gunnison Valley Hospital Emergency Room, 970.641.1456.**
- b. If previously treated by an off campus provider, contact their office for further instruction.

#### **4. I/ my son or daughter is starting to improve.**

Discontinue use of any fever reducing medication, continue antiviral or other medications if prescribed. Do not return to class until you are free from fever for 24 hours without use of a fever reducing medication this includes ibuprofen or acetaminophen. Although current recommendations are for self isolation until 24 hours without a fever, WSC supports students out of work for a full 7 days from onset of symptoms, especially for campus jobs, childcare, food service and retail employees.

#### **5. I/ my son or daughter is a high risk individual.**

*Individuals at High Risk for Severe Disease include:*

1. Pregnant women
2. Persons on immunosuppressive medication for any reason
3. Persons with chronic cardiac, neurological, metabolic, hematological, pulmonary diseases, including asthma
- a. Consult your individual health care provider for advice or recommendations. At the first sign of symptoms, please seek care with your provider or the Campus Health Center. If you call the Campus Health Center, please notify us if you are in the high risk group and may have the flu. Please be aware that persons on immunosuppressive medications may not develop a fever and symptoms may present differently. Attempt to arrange a same day appointment. If no appointment is available, ask to speak to the health care provider. Parents be aware that the health care provider may want to speak directly to the sick student. Also, remember to give your call back number.
- b. As advocates for our students, WSC supports decisions made by you and your health care provider regarding the appropriateness of attending school during an H1N1 outbreak. We will do all we can in assisting individuals dealing with these special circumstances. Please contact the Office of Student Affairs or the Campus Health Center for assistance.

#### **6. I/ my son or daughter wants to return home during the course of illness.**

- a. WSC supports a sick student's decision to return home during a period of influenza like illness. Please note those with influenza or influenza like illness should not travel by public transportation. Also, sick students should not drive.
- b. If you are leaving school due to your illness, inform the following:
  1. Your parents
  2. Your professors
  3. Office of Student Affairs
  4. Campus Health Center or your health care provider
  5. Your "Flu Buddy" and roommate

#### **7 My/ my son or daughter's roommate is sick with influenza like symptoms what can I do?**

- a. Colleges across the country will be handling the impact of H1N1 illness differently based on available resources. The Office of Student Affairs and Office of Residence Life have determined that quarantine and/or strict, enforced isolation will not be a workable option. Voluntary self-isolation has been shown to be beneficial in slowing the spread of respiratory diseases such as influenza.

- b. If a roommate, who is not sick and wishes to be moved out of a “sick” room and be reassigned to a temporary residence hall room, we will do our best to accommodate this request.
- c. Roommate exposure risks may have occurred as early as 24 hours prior to onset of symptoms. Infectivity may continue to some degree for up to 7 days. Peak infectivity tends to also peak during the most symptomatic days of illness. The virus may survive up to 2-8 hours on surfaces but is easily killed with soap and water or household disinfectants. However, the primary transmission is through respiratory droplets from close (3-6 feet) contact coughing or sneezing. Utilizing social distancing, masks and cleaning surfaces should reduce transmission rates.
- d. Roommates and close contacts who are students are advised to call the Campus Health Center to discuss possible preventative antiviral medication.

#### **8. What about a H1N1 vaccine?**

WSC is currently planning for a mass vaccination campaign on-campus when this comes available. Details will be made available in the near future. Seasonal influenza shots will be supplied as usual and are encouraged.