

Texas Wesleyan University
Flu Response Procedures
August 2009

Scope

These Procedures apply to any outbreak of the flu, including H1N1. Policies and procedures apply to all University operations and campuses.

Information Packets

Once information regarding an imminent threat of an outbreak of the flu is received from the CDC or local health authorities, information sheets or packets will be prepared and distributed to all faculty, staff and students. Packets will be based on information received from the CDC, local health authorities and/or information unique to the University.

The Office of Student Life will prepare the packets for students and distribute via e-mail, U.S. Mail or hand delivery. It may also be posted on the University's website. The Office of Student Life will schedule forums with students to explain the content of the packages and answer any questions.

The Office of Human Resources will prepare packets for faculty and staff. These packets will be distributed to department heads. Department heads will have the responsibility for distributing the information to their respective employees. Human resources will be available, upon request, to attend employee meetings.

The School of Law will distribute the above-mentioned information to students and employees at the law school.

It is important to note that information may change quickly. Human resources will endeavor to keep students and employees informed. Students and employees must take responsibility for their own well-being by keeping apprised of developments and by taking appropriate personal action.

Attendance

The CDC has advised that anyone with flu-like symptoms **who also has a fever** remain at home until the fever has dissipated for at least 24-hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Employees who accrue sick and vacation leave will be required to use that time if they are absent from work. Parents of school age children who stay home to care for an ill child are also required to use sick or vacation leave. Supervisors who suspect that an employee has the flu and is running a fever may send them home. Doctor's notes are not required for a return to work.

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Commuter students who have flu-like symptoms, and **who also have a fever**, should remain at home and not attend class or any other University event until the fever has dissipated for at least 24-hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Residential students who have flu-like symptoms, and **who also have a fever**, should make every effort to return home or remain in their room until the fever has dissipated for at least 24-hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Alternate arrangements will be made by residence life for roommates, and delivery of meals to quarantined students.

Reporting

Faculty, staff and students should report absences due to the flu to either the Office of the Provost (817) 531-4405 or the Office of Human Resources (817) 531-4286. Faculty, staff and students at the law school should report to Becky Key's office (817) 212-4088. To avoid duplication, reported absences must include the name of the student or the employee. All information is confidential and will only be used to identify the number of cases and trends. Once a report is received it should be logged on the notification form and forwarded to the Office of Human Resources.

Academic Plan

Students affected by the flu will be given a reasonable amount of time to complete their course work.

Vaccinations

Check with your primary healthcare provider for more information pertaining to the vaccine or to obtain the vaccination.

In addition and through the University's nurse's office, the University will continue to offer appropriate vaccinations, **if available** and warranted, to faculty, staff and students. The cost of vaccinations for seasonal flu and H1N1 will be determined at the time of the event based on the cost to the University. The CDC has advised that targeted groups for the H1N1 virus are people age 24 and under, pregnant women and others who, due to other health issues, are susceptible to the flu. Since the availability of the vaccine may be limited, the target groups listed above will be given priority.

The University will not test for H1N1. All flu-like symptoms with a fever will be treated as the flu.

The University does not guarantee the availability of vaccine and does not assume liability for any treatment or adverse reaction to a vaccine.

Cleanliness

During the outbreak of the flu, the University, through the Department of Facilities Operations, will endeavor to sanitize all residential housing common areas on a daily basis.

At least one sanitizing liquid dispenser will be made available in all University buildings.

Faculty, staff and students must take individual responsibility for the cleanliness of their immediate work areas and living space.

Campus Closure

Barring a catastrophic outbreak either on campus or in the community, the University, as advised by the CDC, intends to continue operations with these procedures in place even in the event of reported cases on campus.

However in the event of a campus closure, it will apply to all locations. All faculty, staff (except essential personnel) and students (except those who must live on campus) shall not come on campus during a closure. A closure will impact **all** extracurricular events, including athletics.

Closures and re-openings will be announced using the local media and Wesleyan Emergency Management System (WEMS). The registrar will e-mail all students via Datatel.

A decision to close ultimately rests with the President.

Communications

Announcements and dissemination of information could be made in a variety of ways including the media, WEMS, e-mail or U.S. Mail.

Responses to questions from the media must be made through the Office of Communications.

Privacy

HIPAA – The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) federal act established in 1996 requires privacy standards to safeguard medical information of individuals. The purpose of HIPAA is to protect and enhance the rights of consumers/employees regarding their health information.

Texas Wesleyan University's Office of Human Resources (HR) will follow the following procedures to ensure protection of Personal Health Information* (for reference PHI is defined below) for University employees and students.

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Due to *Protected Health Information (PHI)* as it relates to HIPPA, reported medical information will be maintained in a separate file and the specific information about an individual will only be shared with University personnel on a need-to-know-basis to protect the individual's privacy.

* *Protected Health Information (PHI)* – Health information created or received by Texas Wesleyan University that identifies or can be used to identify an individual, and relates to:

- the past, present, or future physical or mental condition of the individual;
- health care provided to the individual; or
- the past, present, or future payment for the individual's health care.

Do not discuss or disclose an employee's or student's medical condition with others unless it is on a need to know-basis, e.g. employee's immediate supervisor, human resources, provost's office or a student's current faculty member – even if they've discussed it directly with you. Instead, encourage them (or an immediate family member) to directly contact University personnel who need to know they will be absent due to illness.

This policy is maintained by the Office of Human Resources. It may not be deviated from or amended without prior approval from the Office of Human Resources or the President of the University.