

MEMO

DATE: 09-04-09
TO: Faculty and Staff
FROM: Barry Ballard
Subject: Plan for an Emergency Response to Influenza with Plan Document

As you know, there is a worldwide pandemic of the H1N1 influenza virus. The typical seasonal flu normally effects hundreds of thousands annually and kills about 36,000 in the U.S. Things will be much worse this year, because, in addition to the usual seasonal flu we will experience a major outbreak of the H1N1 virus, too. The CDC is estimating that more than twice as many will be infected by the H1N1 virus and up to 70,000 will die from it in the U.S. because it is very contagious.

The community health experts in Arkansas vary in their estimates of how many people might get infected with the H1N1 virus, but the general consensus is 30 to 50 percent of the population. Many normal healthy individuals will get sick though the symptoms are somewhat mild for most. Therefore, we have to develop a plan for how we are going to respond from a prevention standpoint and how we are going to respond when we start having the outbreak of sick students, faculty and staff.

OTC is adopting an emergency action response plan in preparation for what is destined to be a bad flu season. The plan should be consistent with the recommendations of the CDC for institutions of higher education and include:

1. Plans for public information and education of the College community -
 - A. How to prevent infection and minimize exposure
 - B. Recommended action for infected and sick persons
2. Plans to manage the impact of 30 to 50% of the students sick and absent.
3. Plans to manage the impact of 30 to 50% of the employees sick and absent.
4. Plans to get as many people as possible in the college community vaccinated against both the H1N1 and seasonal flu.

You will begin to see evidence of our plan implementation right away – new signage around campus, new information and links on our web site, handouts for employees and students, email messages and updates to OTC Everyone, and the like.

The OTC emergency action response plan will be consistent with the recommendations of the CDC. Much more information on fighting this pandemic can be found at www.flu.gov.

OUACHITA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Emergency Response to Influenza 2009-10

Plan Document

INTRODUCTION

This emergency response plan was developed to minimize the impact of influenza and other diseases on the safe and efficient operation of the college. This plan was developed with input from the OTC Executive Committee and the OTC Division Chairs and is intended to be consistent with the guidelines for Higher Education Institutions developed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The OTC Response Plan includes the following components:

1. Plans for public information and education of the College community -
 - A. How to prevent infection and minimize exposure
 - B. Recommended action for infected and sick persons
2. Plans to manage the impact of 30 to 50% of the students sick and absent.
3. Plans to manage the impact of 30 to 50% of the employees sick and absent.
4. Plans to get as many people as possible in the college community vaccinated against the H1N1, Type A seasonal flu and other highly contagious diseases that could affect college operations and possibly contribute to a pandemic.

PUBLIC INFORMATION ON THE DISEASE AND PREVENTION

OTC will promote the four important ways that students, faculty, staff and campus visitors can stay healthy and keep from getting sick with flu or spreading the flu and which include:

- 1. Practice good hand hygiene** by washing their hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing and sneezing and by using hand sanitizers. Signs and posters that encourage hand washing will be posted everywhere on campus especially close to hand washing facilities.
- 2. Practice respiratory etiquette** by covering their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough and sneeze or sneeze into the cuff of the sleeve, into their elbow or into a shoulder. These practices largely halt the main way flu is spread - from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes. Signs and posters about good respiratory etiquette will also be posted around campus.
- 3. Insist that sick persons stay isolated** by encouraging sick students, faculty, staff and visitors stay away from the campus and at home for at least 24 hours after they no longer have fever. OTC will post signs and posters about the need for self-isolation around campus and provide instruction on how families can create home disaster kits so family members will be prepared to stay at home if they are sick.
- 4. Get people vaccinated against the flu** by encouraging everyone to talk with their health care providers about the advisability of getting vaccinated and by making vaccination free and available on campus for everyone.

ACTION STEPS

1. OTC will encourage good hand hygiene by A. Making soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizers readily available for everyone (practically every room will have hand sanitizer available) and B. Educating about the need for hand washing through direct education, flyers, posters and email messages.

2. OTC will encourage good respiratory etiquette by A. Educating people about how easily the flu is spread from person to person by the droplets caused from coughing and sneezing through direct education, posters, flyers, and email messages and B. By making sure tissues and no-touch waste baskets are readily available on campus.

3. OTC will encourage sick persons to self-isolate themselves by A. Giving direct instruction on the need for sick people to stay home until 24 hours after fever is gone (not because of fever-reducing meds) and by providing information on this need in posters, flyers and email and B. By modifying employee sick leave policies where possible to make staying at home easier, C. By encouraging faculty to facilitate student make up work and by using the internet to facilitate online make up opportunities.

4. OTC will educate students, faculty, and staff on the **symptoms of flu**. Symptoms of flu include fever of 100 degrees (38 degrees Celsius) or higher or chills AND cough or sore throat. Other symptoms of the flu can also include runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting. Information about the symptoms will be communicated to the OTC community in documents, email, and on the college website. Fever and pain reducing medicines typically include ibuprofen, acetaminophen and aspirin. However, aspirin should never be given to anyone under 18 years of age with flu or fever because this can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

5. OTC will educate students, faculty and staff on how to take care of someone with flu-like symptoms. Though the best way to avoid catching the flu is to stay away of persons who are sick, sometimes we have to become a care giver to one with flu-like symptoms. When caring for a sick person it is best to limit contact with the person and try to stay at least 6 feet away. When close contact cannot be avoided, the sick person should wear a face mask, if tolerable, the care giver should wear a face mask, clean commonly-touched areas frequently with disinfectant wipes, and wash the hands frequently. OTC will provide information to the college community about these needed practices through direct education, email and the college website.

6. OTC will engage in other practices that will minimize the spread of the disease and which will include, among other things, A. Making disinfectant wipes available in every office, classroom and laboratory, B. Asking the janitorial contractor to use disinfectant on all commonly touched surfaces, C. Ask students, faculty, and staff to use disinfectant wipes to frequently wipe down commonly touched surfaces such as keyboards, desk tops, chairs, telephones, door knobs and door pulls, and other laboratory equipment and tools, and D. Make flu vaccinations (both H1N1 and seasonal flu) available on campus to students and employees free of charge.

7. Finally, OTC administrators will constantly and carefully monitor student absences, employee sick leave frequencies, bulletins from state and federal health agencies, news stories and the like to consider if more drastic action should be taken to maintain the operation of the college and to protect the safety and health of the college community.

Barry Ballard, President
Ouachita Technical College
One College Circle
Malvern, AR 72104
Tel: 501-337-5000
September 1, 2009