



October 15, 2009

Dear colleagues,

We are quickly approaching what will be an uncertain and unusual flu season because there are two types of flu: the regular (or seasonal) flu, and the H1N1 (swine) flu, a new virus that has caused so much concern since last April.

As you may know, flu can be spread easily from person to person. Therefore, we are taking steps to prevent the spread of flu at Contra Costa Community College District for as long as possible, **but, we need your help to accomplish this.**

Here are some prevention tips to stay healthy this flu season:

- **Practice good hand hygiene** by washing your hands with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective.
- **Practice respiratory etiquette** by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder, not into your hands. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth; germs are spread this way.
- **Know the signs and symptoms of the flu.** A fever is a temperature taken with a thermometer that is equal to or greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius. Look for possible signs of fever: if the person feels very warm, has a flushed appearance, or is sweating or shivering.
- **Stay home (don't go to class or work) if you have flu or flu-like illness for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever** or signs of a fever. Whether or not you have a fever should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).
- **Talk with your health care providers about whether you should be vaccinated for seasonal flu.** Also if you are at higher risk for flu complications from 2009 H1N1 flu, you should consider getting the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. People at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 flu complications include pregnant women and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes). For more information about priority groups for vaccination, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm.

For now, we are doing everything we can to keep our institution operating as usual. Some steps we have already taken include:

- Revising plans to increase frequent cleaning of high-touch surface areas;
- Installing hand sanitizer dispensers on each floor at the District Office near the elevator, and at strategic locations at the colleges; and
- Creating a District website at <http://www.4cd.net/crpa/h1n1/default.aspx> that provides additional information on how to stay healthy this flu season.

For additional helpful information, we recommend you visit the following websites:

- Contra Costa County Public Health Department: www.cchealth.org
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
- Health and Human Services Interagency Public Affairs Group on Influenza Preparedness and Response: www.flu.gov

We are working closely with the Contra Costa County health department to monitor flu conditions and make decisions about the best steps to take concerning our institution.

We will notify you by email as new information arrives or additional changes are made to our strategy to prevent the spread of flu in our District.

Stay healthy.

Helen