

EIU Health Services H1N1 Update - October 14, 2009

During the month of September, visits to Health Service for influenza-like illness increased and were higher than expected for this time of year. Approximately 90 cases of influenza have been diagnosed in Eastern students since the beginning of the school year. Several changes have been made to accommodate the increased volume at Health Service, including separate waiting rooms for sick and well patients. The south side of the clinic has been designated for students exhibiting signs and symptoms of upper respiratory or gastrointestinal infections. Each day specific doctors and nurse practitioners are assigned to work on this side and these providers wear personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent the spread of infection. More appointments are available for students needing same day care.

Students experiencing flu-like symptoms of fever equal to or greater than 100 F and cough and/or sore throat should call Health Service or their primary care provider for further guidance or an appointment. Students identified as having Influenza will be asked to self-isolate until fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. EIU Health Service is currently preparing for mass H1N1 Influenza vaccination clinics for students, faculty and staff. We anticipate receiving the vaccine in the next couple weeks and will begin an advertising campaign to notify the campus of the date, time and location of these clinics. Those at highest risk for H1N1 infection include healthcare workers, 6 month through 24 year olds, pregnant women, caregivers of infants less than 6 months old and 25-49 year olds with chronic health conditions. These people will be given first priority for the vaccine when it becomes available. Information regarding the H1N1 Influenza vaccination clinics will be distributed through the University Newsletter, Daily Eastern News and other media sources.

Nationwide, influenza activity continues to increase throughout the United States. Flu activity is now widespread in 37 states. Approximately 92% of colleges and universities have reported cases of H1N1 Influenza. The most recent case rate is 18.9% per 10,000 students. This is down six percent from the previous week. Both the CDC (Center for Disease Control) and the ACHA (American College Health Association) are monitoring the situation and providing timely updates.

Health Service and the Emergency Management Team will continue to provide updates and information regarding our situation. We encourage everyone to follow the 3 C's, clean, cover and contain and remind everyone to do their part in helping to prevent the spread of this infection.

Sincerely,
Sheila D. Baker, MD
Medical Director Eastern Illinois University Health Service and the
Eastern Illinois University Emergency Management Team