

3.5 Flu Pandemic / Infectious Disease Response Plan

In the event of an influenza or infectious disease pandemic, colleges and universities will play an integral role in protecting the health and safety of students, employees and their families. East Georgia State College's response plan follows the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) framework specifically designed to assist colleges and universities to develop and/or improve plans to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic.

1. Planning and Coordination: A pandemic / infectious disease (ERC) and response team (including trained campus personnel, counseling staff, campus police, communications staff, plant operations staff, business operations director, housing director, academic staff and student representatives) are in place. Periodic training is conducted to define the roles and responsibilities for preparedness, response, and recovery planning. Measures are in place to ensure that key staff involved in the response will be accountable and responsible and financial resources will be dedicated for key stakeholders engaged in planning and executing specific components of the operational plan. The response plan includes timelines and deliverables.

The EGSC Pandemic and Infectious Disease Response Plan (PIDRP) addresses the college's functioning at all stages of the event, from pre-event assessment and planning, to, various stages of illness, and through post event assessment according to the World Health Organizations guidelines. A copy of the East Georgia State College Pandemic and Infectious Disease Response Plan (PIDRP) is attached as **Appendix D**. Planning for different outbreak scenarios includes variations in severity of illness, mode of transmission, and rates of infection in the community. If necessary, temporary housing for quarantine of exposed and/or ill students could be set up in our gymnasium. The College may stockpile non-perishable food and equipment that may be needed in the case of an influenza pandemic. The President and Emergency Response Committee will make administrative decisions concerning the cancellation of classes, sporting events and/or other public events; closure of campus, and assessment of the suitability of student per guidelines set for the in the PIDRP.

The College will consult and coordinate with state and local public health and other local authorities to identify legal authority, decision makers, trigger points, and thresholds to institute community containment measures such as closing (and re-opening) the college. The College will consult the following authorities: Emanuel County Health Department, Bulloch County Health Department, Centers for Disease Control, Department of Health and Human Services and University System of Georgia's Central Office for guidance in executing infection control measures, including case identification, reporting information about ill students and employees, isolation, movement restriction, and provision of healthcare, if possible, on campus. The College's Pandemic and Infectious Disease plan will be consistent with the East Georgia State College Emergency Action Plan and coordinate with the pandemic plan of the community and of the University System of Georgia. The Plan will include determination of the surge capacity for healthcare and other mental health and social services to meet the needs of the college and community during and after a pandemic.

East Georgia State College's Emergency Action Plan includes identification of key contacts with local and state public health officials as well as the University System of Georgia (including back-ups) and the chain of communications, including alternate mechanisms. East Georgia State College will test the linkages between the college Incident Command System and the Incident Command Systems of the local and/or state health department and the University System of Georgia through live and tabletop exercises and drills and revise our response plan as needed. East Georgia State College will participate in exercises of the community's pandemic plan.

A recovery plan to deal with consequences of the pandemic (e.g., loss of students, loss of staff, and financial and operational disruption) is included in the Business Continuity Plans of the various departments on campus.

2. Continuity of Student Learning and Operations

Alternative procedures to assure continuity of instruction (e.g., web-based distance instruction, telephone trees, mailed lessons and assignments,) in the event of college closures are considered in the below H1N1 Flu Procedures.

H1N1 Flu Procedure for East Georgia State College Faculty and Staff

East Georgia State College, under the direction of the Emergency Response Committee (ERC) and the president, to coordinate all EGSC efforts related to any pandemic events; to conduct pandemic training and exercises; to report any suspected pandemic flu cases to the appropriate authorities; to develop appropriate policies unique to a pandemic event; to communicate to all EGSC students, faculty, staff, and the local community information regarding pandemic preparedness and plan implementation; and to coordinate all communications with the Media.

All College employees should come to work if they are healthy. EGSC is open for business, and all faculty and staff who are in good health are expected to report for work and carry out their normal duties. If this changes, the information will be shared via e-mail and on the EGSC website. All pandemic-related decisions rest with the ERC, and the president.

The EGSC campus may have to be shut down during the semester (up to 10 working days) if there is a serious outbreak of the H1N1 virus. If East Georgia State College is forced to shut down regular operations due to a pandemic, class offerings will shift to an on-line format or other alternative electronic methods. The faculty must let their students know as soon as possible that if this should happen faculty will be in contact with students through e-mail or D2L to let them know the plans for their course. Since there may likely be no lead time, faculty will need to develop the plans for their course as soon as possible and inform students on what to do should this serious situation arise. Faculty are asked to maintain an awareness of the absentee rates of their classes in order to report significant, sustained absences over a short period of time, such as a week, due to flu-like symptoms. Significant absences will be defined as 10% or more over the normal absentee rate and should be reported to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and their Deans. While faculty are not asked to change policies related to class attendance, please be aware of the seriousness of a flu pandemic and our need to work with students to make up work if they must miss class.

If sick, employees need to stay home, take care of themselves, and do everything possible to avoid infecting others. Employees with flu-like symptoms should stay home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever, or signs of fever, without the use of fever-reducing medicines. Any EGSC employee who must miss work because of illness should notify his or her supervisor. If the cause of the illness is a confirmed or suspected case of the H1N1 flu virus, the employee should notify the supervisor about this, too. The supervisor will notify the Office of Human Resources, so that the College can maximize the protection of others in the College community. The College's standard leave policies apply.

Students who are diagnosed with the H1N1 virus should notify Dr. Sandra Sharman, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, at 478-289-2034 and Dr. Sharman will notify the faculty members in whose courses the student is enrolled about the illness.

A continuity of operations plan for maintaining the essential operations of the college including payroll; ongoing communication with employees, students and families; police department; and maintenance currently exists within the Business Continuity Plans for each department within the College.

3. Infection Control Policies and Procedures:

East Georgia State College will implement infection control policies and procedures that help limit the spread of influenza on campus (e.g. promotion of hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette) as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic/healthprofessional.htm). The College will strive to make good hygiene a habit now in order to help protect employees and students from many infectious diseases such as influenza. Encourage students and staff to get annual influenza vaccine. The College will procure, store and provide sufficient and accessible infection prevention supplies (e.g., soap, alcohol-based hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal).

The College will establish policies for employee and student sick leave absences unique to pandemic influenza (e.g., non-punitive, liberal leave), consistent with the University System of Georgia's policies and the Centers for Disease Control's recommendations. Additionally, policies will be established which address sick leave or employees and students suspected to be ill or who become ill on campus.

Employees and students with known or suspected pandemic influenza should not remain on campus and should return only after their symptoms resolve and they are physically ready to return to campus.

East Georgia State College's Student Health Clinic is a non-urgent care facility with limited capacity. Students with suspected pandemic influenza may use the services of the clinic for diagnosis and limited treatment but will be referred to the local hospital for further treatment and monitoring. EGSC does not have a healthcare facility for its faculty and staff but can offer the use of the gymnasium for temporary housing, quarantine, and storage of critical supplies. The College will coordinate with local and state authorities and share supplies to support a surge in demand.

The College will adopt CDC travel recommendations (www.cdc.gov/travel/) during an influenza pandemic and be able to support voluntary and mandatory movement restrictions. Recommendations may include restricting travel to and from affected domestic and international areas, recalling nonessential employees working in or near an affected area when an outbreak begins, and distributing health information to persons who are returning from affected areas.

4. Communications Plan

The College will assess readiness to meet communications needs in preparation for an influenza pandemic, including regular review, testing, and updating of communications plans that link with public health authorities and other key stakeholders (See: www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/index.htm).

The dissemination plan for communication with employees, students, and families, including lead spokespersons and links to other communication networks will follow the Notification system as outlined in the East Georgia State College Emergency Action Plan. The College will assure the provision of redundant communication systems/channels that allow for the expedited transmission and receipt of information as outlined in the East Georgia State College Emergency Action Plan.

The College will test platforms (e.g., hotlines, telephone trees, dedicated websites, local radio or television) for communicating college response and actions to employees, students, and families as outlined in the East

Georgia State College Emergency Action Plan. The College will advise employees and students where to find up-to-date and reliable pandemic information from federal, state and local public health sources.

The College will disseminate information about the college's pandemic preparedness and response plan to the students and college community. The College will disseminate information from public health sources covering routine infection control (e.g., hand hygiene, coughing /sneezing etiquette), pandemic influenza fundamentals (e.g., signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission), personal and family protection and response strategies (including the HHS Pandemic Influenza Planning Guide for Individuals and Families at www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/tab3.html), and the at-home care of ill students or employees and their family members. Examples of such communications to faculty, staff and students are shown below.

Faculty/Instructor Fact Sheet - Action Steps to Prevent the Spread of Flu

Take the following steps ALL the time and not only during a flu pandemic to help keep your students and yourself from getting sick with flu.

- **Educate and encourage students to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue** when they cough or sneeze. Also, provide them with easy access to tissues. Remind them to cover coughs or sneezes using their elbow instead of their hand when a tissue is not available.
- **Remind students to practice good hand hygiene** and provide the time and supplies (easy access to running water and soap or alcohol-based hand cleaners) for them to wash their hands as often as necessary.
- **Be a good role model** by practicing good hand hygiene and covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- **Keep an eye out for sick students and refer them to their health care provider or Health Services (for EGSCS students) for evaluation.** Sick people should stay at home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- **Clean surfaces and items** that are more likely to have frequent hand contact such as desks, door knobs, keyboards, or pens, with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas (all classrooms are already cleaned daily, but if you have concerns, notify your building supervisor).
- **Teachers should also stay home when sick.** Stay home until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).
- **If you are pregnant, have asthma, diabetes, or other conditions that put you at higher risk for complications from the flu,** you should **speak with your doctor as soon as possible** if you develop symptoms of flu-like illness. People at high risk of flu complications who develop flu can benefit from early treatment with antiviral medicines.
- **If you have children,** plan ahead for childcare if your child gets sick or his or her school is dismissed.
- **Be prepared in case the flu becomes more severe.**
 - **Develop options for how schoolwork can be continued at home** (e.g., homework packets, Web-based lessons, phone calls), if school is dismissed or your students are home because someone in their household is sick.

- **Be prepared for sick students or staff stay home for at least 7 days**, even if they feel better sooner. Those who are still sick after 7 days should continue to stay home until at least 24 hours after symptoms have gone away.
- **Allow high-risk students to stay home.** These students should make this decision in consultation with their physician or other health professional.
- **Find ways to increase social distances** (the space between people) in your classroom. For example, you might rearrange desks so that there is more space between students, consider cancelling classes that bring students together from different rooms, or postpone class trips.

For more information, EGSC Statesboro students should visit <http://auxiliary.georgiasouthern.edu/healthservices> and www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu

H1N1 (swine flu): What you need to know!

Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners* are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.
- Get vaccinated for both the seasonal flu and H1N1 (swine) flu; vaccinations will be available in October.

What to do if you get the flu:

- Symptoms of flu include fever of 100F or more, plus cough and/or sore throat, and may also include body aches, headache, runny nose, congestion, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting.
- If you develop symptoms, notify your primary care physician, immediately.
- If you are diagnosed with the flu or have flu-like illness, and you can do so, return home until you have no fever for 24 hours; if you cannot return home, then self-isolate in your dorm room or apartment room until no fever for 24 hours.
- If you are sick and sharing a common space with other household members in your home, wear a facemask, if available and tolerable, to help prevent spreading the virus to others.
- Using a telephone or other electronic means, notify your teachers and instructors that you are ill; and, if you live in a dorm on campus, notify your RD.
- Notify your roommates and/or other close contacts that you are ill.
- **DO NOT TAKE ASPIRIN IF YOU HAVE FLU OR FLU LIKE ILLNESS.**

In order ensure adequate supplies of medication, and to reduce the chance of resistance, CDC recommends that treatment of flu with antiviral medication (like Tami flu or Elena) be limited to the following high-risk groups:

- Children younger than 5 years old. The risk for severe complications from seasonal influenza is highest among children younger than 2 years old.
- Adults 65 years of age and older.
- Persons with the following conditions:

- Chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, hematological (including sickle cell disease), neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus).
- Immunosuppressant, including that caused by medications or by HIV.
- Pregnant women.
- Persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.
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If you have any of the above high-risk conditions, notify your health care provider immediately if you develop symptoms or are concerned about a possible exposure. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm.

The College will anticipate and plan communications to address the potential fear and anxiety of employees, students and families that may result from rumors or misinformation.

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The COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Declaration ended at midnight on May 11, 2023.
Information for archival use only.