

TO: Faculty and Staff
FROM: Ira Schoenwald
DATE: September 14, 2009
RE: H1N1 Flu Response Guidelines

Illinois State University is currently operating under all normal leave and workplace policies as provided in the *Policy, Procedures and Guidelines* at <http://www.policy.ilstu.edu/> except as may be provided below to clarify reporting of time off and other workplace issues related to the current H1N1 flu situation.

H1N1 FLU GUIDELINES

GENERAL

Q. What steps is the University taking to respond to H1N1 flu?

University administrators are monitoring the situation and are fully prepared to act rapidly as conditions dictate. The University maintains regular communication with McLean County Health Department, and the Illinois Department of Public Health.

Q. How will updates be communicated with employees?

A. The University understands the concerns about this public health issue, and is committed to keeping members of our community informed. Information is posted on the University's H1N1 Web site at www.H1N1.IllinoisState.edu. Updates will be posted to this website, and notifications also may be sent through mass campus e-mail or campus mail.

Q. What precautionary measures should I take?

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water. Make use of hand sanitizer dispensers that will be located in campus facilities.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue or upper part of your arm, *not* your hands.
- Plan to get the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. People under age 25 are among those recommended to receive the vaccine first.
- Stay home if you are sick. Do not return to class or work until 24 hours after you are free of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

Q. I am concerned about being exposed to the H1N1 flu at work. Do I need to report to work?

A. Yes, all staff who are not sick or caring for a sick dependent should report for work unless otherwise directed. As ISU employees, everyone has an obligation to keep programs and offices running to the fullest extent possible, even in an emergency. ISU will be proactive to reduce the risk of exposure in the workplace.

Q. What if I am considered high risk?

A. Employees at high risk for flu complications should consult with their health care provider as soon as possible for guidance.

Q. I have been exposed to the flu but have no symptoms, should I stay home?

A. In general, the current recommendations state that individuals without symptoms can continue their normal activities in and out of the workplace.

Q. If I'm experiencing flu-like symptoms, what should I do?

A. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the University recommend that people with flu-like illness remain at home and away from other people. Minimizing the spread of the virus is critical and it is important for employees to take personal responsibility to help slow the spread of the flu virus. By remaining at home, employees can help protect others from getting the flu. Contact your supervisor or department (as appropriate) and stay out of the workplace. Use your discretion to contact your healthcare professional for additional assistance.

Q. When can I return to work?

A. The CDC and the University recommend that employees with flu-like symptoms stay home for at least 24 hours *after* they no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (have chills, feel very warm, have a flushed appearance, or are sweating). This should be determined without the use of fever-reducing medications (any medicine that contains ibuprofen or acetaminophen).

Q. I suspect that a coworker has the flu, what should I do?

A. Please discuss your concerns with your supervisor. In spite of these concerns however, employees who are not sick or caring for a sick dependent are expected to work unless granted leave. The University is not recommending that individuals without flu-like symptoms change their normal routine.

Q. Is the H1N1 flu a condition that will qualify me for the use of Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave?

A. FMLA may be available for an employee's own serious health condition or to care for a family member with a serious health condition. For detailed information please go to <http://www.hr.ilstu.edu/benefits/leaves/fmla.shtml> or contact Human Resources at 438-8311 and press #2 for Benefits.

Q. Will conference travel be permitted?

A. The University will follow CDC travel guidelines. Information is posted on the University's H1N1 Web site at www.H1N1.IllinoisState.edu.

NOTIFICATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Q. Who should I notify if I'm off sick with the flu or flu-like symptoms?

A. Any employee who is (or expects to be) absent from employment shall notify the appropriate University supervisor immediately, and, in cases where the absence is expected to be longer than three days, the employee shall notify the supervisor of the anticipated length of absence so that arrangements can be made for the employee's duties to be assumed during the absence. Continued communication during any time of absence is important.

Q. Do I need to provide a doctor's note if I take sick leave due to the flu or flu-like symptoms?

A. The University plans to continue to follow policy 3.2.7 Sick Leave, however the need for documentation will be flexible and in accordance with CDC recommendations, a doctor's note will not normally be required. The Office of Human Resources must be notified when an employee is absent from the work place five or more days for illness. Verification of the illness from a doctor may be required should an absence extend beyond five work days. The University reserves the right to require acceptable documentation of illness, injury, or disability before allowing any use of sick leave benefits.

Q. I can't obtain a doctor's note, what should I do?

A. Please contact your HR Benefit Counselor if you have any questions or concerns regarding obtaining a doctor's note.

Q. Can my supervisor send me home if I choose to work?

A. An employee will not ordinarily be sent home unless he or she is exhibiting symptoms of the flu such as coughing, nasal congestion and discharge, fever, sore throat, headache, body aches and general fatigue. Employees who *are exhibiting* symptoms may be sent home.

CARING FOR OTHERS

Q. I have a dependent that is sick with the flu / flu-like symptoms and want to stay at home to look after them. May I apply for leave for this purpose?

A. If the person who is sick is dependent on you, resides with you, and requires assistance, then – yes – you can apply for leave to look after them.

Q. What if a family member who does not live with me is sick; may I stay home to care for them?

A. The use of sick leave, FMLA, and other discretionary leaves will be administered in accordance with University policy.

Q. What if my children's school or day care provider is closed and there is no one else to watch the kids?

A. If your typical care arrangement is closed due to H1N1 flu you may request to use your sick leave, even if your child is not ill. (typically the University policy requires that your child be ill to use sick leave). When you return to work you will need to provide documentation to your supervisor regarding the school or day care closure dates. You may request to use sick, vacation, other available leave, or leave without pay

Q. May I bring my children to work?

No. Children may not be brought to the workplace.

Q. May I work at home?

A. The regular *3.1.31 Work At Home Guidelines for Non Faculty appointments* policy will continue to be followed. Any agreement to work from home must be agreed upon and properly documented. For any alternate schedule from the standard work week (8:00 am – 4:30 pm, M-F) employees must complete the alternate work schedule form.

HOW WILL I BE PAID

Q. What type of leave should I use for H1N1 absences?

A. Use of sick leave and other accrued benefits will be handled according to existing policies. Record the time off as you would normally do for all other illnesses.

Q. Where can I find out how much leave I have available?

A. Employees may view their leave balances through I-Campus at <https://www.icampus.ilstu.edu/>

Q. Is there a maximum amount of time allowed off with H1N1 flu?

Each case may be different. However, employees are reminded that the university has a policy against fraudulent use of sick leave and may not approve the use of sick benefits if abuse is suspected and requested medical documentation does not support the absence. Discipline may also be administered if necessary.

Q. I have already used up all my sick leave benefits, what options do I have?

A. Sick leave is like an 'insurance' to assist in times when it is needed and should be used responsibly. It is important that you maintain a reserve of sick leave for future use, wherever possible. However if you have no sick leave balance, sick leave bank benefits for participants, vacation, unpaid leave maybe granted to any staff member who is absent from work because of flu-like symptoms or need to care for a sick dependendent on a case-by-case basis.

MANAGERS H1N1 QUESTIONS

Q. I'm a manager and one of my staff members has notified me that they're sick with the flu / flu-like symptoms. What do I need to do?

A. If you are a supervisor and one of your employees has notified you of flu-like symptoms, supervisors should instruct the employee to stay home from work for at least 24 hours after you are free of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

Q. I am a supervisor/manager and someone on my staff is exhibiting flu-like symptoms. What should I do?

A. Employees should take personal responsibility to help slow the spread of the flu virus. However, we need the assistance of supervisor in ensuring that sick employees stay out of the workplace to avoid the potential of spreading illness to others. Employees who *are exhibiting* flu like symptoms should be sent home.

Q. What if an employee refuses to go home?

A. If an employee disputes the supervisor's determination that they need to go home, the employee must go home, but may provide a certification from his or her health care provider to ISU Human Resources as soon as possible in order to return to work. The certification must state that the employee poses no significant risk to himself/herself, other employees, or customers in the workplace and may return to work. An employee

who refuses to go home will be considered insubordinate and may be subject to disciplinary action.

OTHER RESOURCES

Q. Aside from local and national newspapers, television and other media, where can I find reliable information about H1N1 flu? I don't want hype. I need facts and reliable information.

A. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has established a Web site of current information on H1N1 flu: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued "Interim CDC Guidance for Institutions of Higher Education and Post-secondary Educational Institutions in Response to Human Infections with Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Virus:
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/guidelines_colleges.htm