

October 12, 2009

Dear Parent,

Several parents have asked about how well we are doing in our efforts to prevent illness and respond to sick students. As a parent and a former Resident Fellow in Wilbur Hall, I appreciate your concerns and your desire to understand as much as possible about the situation on campus.

While we've had many cases of flu that we attribute to the 2009 H1N1 strain, there fortunately have been no hospitalizations. Typically, students have been recovering in 3 to 5 days, or less. Our cases are widely dispersed throughout the campus residences. The illness does not seem to be spreading more between roommates than generally between students at large.

Last week, we had the opportunity to report to our Faculty Senate about our strategy for responding to the increased numbers of ill students. Primary in our strategy is to provide clinical care for those ill students who need it and support for students who can recuperate with self-care alone. Although extremely busy, our caregivers at Vaden Health Center are managing to stay on top of the numbers of ill students.

All across the campus, staff has been working long and hard to support ill students. Ill students continue to receive extra attention, including meal delivery and help approaching professors about academic matters, if requested. Special cleaning is done in residences where ill students live. As students recuperate, we have received some touching "thank yous" for the extra care. And last week we began delivering "flu kits" to ill students, which include tissues, surgical masks, anti-fever medication, alcohol-based hand gel, and instructions as well as our get-well wishes.

We continue to stress isolation in the student's room for the full duration of the illness, plus 24 hours, although we understand how hard that prescription may be to follow for some students. Please reinforce that message with your student in the interest of our entire community.

I'm sure you must be curious about our vaccination program. There have been delays in the delivery of our seasonal influenza vaccine, so beginning today and until further notice, it is available at Vaden Health Center only to those students who fit into a [high-risk category](#), such as having a chronic pulmonary or other condition. Please encourage your student to request a vaccine if he/she is in that category.

We are also awaiting notification of whether and when we will receive H1N1 vaccine for which we have registered. When H1N1 vaccine and/ or additional seasonal flu vaccine serum arrives, we plan to conduct a free, residence-based vaccine program that will be

widely advertised on campus. You can play a role in encouraging your student to be vaccinated.

A few final suggestions: You can stay abreast of further developments at the university's [flu web site](#) and you can help by calling Vaden Health Center only if you have a specific concern about your student's well-being. Most questions are best directed to the [Parent Helpline](#).

And last but not least, try not to worry. We have been preparing for an increase in flu cases on campus since last spring. Nothing is more important than the health of our students.

Sincerely,

Ira Friedman, M.D.
Director, Vaden Health Center