As a member of the faculty, you are an integral partner in HCC’s challenge to respond to the H1N1 (swine) flu that is expected to impact on the institution this fall. Working with your deans, you are the College’s best resource to provide our students with the necessary guidance to continue to meet their educational goals while limiting the risk to other students, faculty and staff.

I would like to share with you letter from Dr. Stephenson to the students about the H1N1 virus that was emailed to all students on August 28, 2009 and has been posted to Campus Cruiser. Following the letter, I have included specific faculty information about communicating with students and providing them with necessary information about the virus and the College.

To: All HCC Students

From: Gwendolyn W. Stephenson, Ph.D.
President

Welcome to Hillsborough Community College. We are very excited to begin this academic year and are pleased that you have selected HCC. I want to provide you with some important information about the H1N1 (Swine) Flu and the preparations that we have been making at the college as we prepare to enter this year’s flu season. It is critical that we all work together to help prevent the spread of the H1N1 Flu virus and good hygiene continues to remain the best precaution.

Here are a few facts that you should know:

Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people, and there are many common sense approaches to help keep you safe and healthy:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues away after use.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective and the college has added hand sanitizing stations throughout high traffic areas on all campuses as additional protection.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are easily spread that way.
- Stay home if you get sick. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommend that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

Please let your professors know immediately if you become ill. If you have been ill, the faculty and the College will work with you either to make up your work or to find a solution ensuring that you do not suffer a grade penalty because of your illness. The health of the HCC community is very important to us and we want to ensure its preservation.

The CDC web-site contains updated information on the spread of the virus and is a great place to find the most current information on the H1N1 virus. http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/#stay_healthy
In addition to Hawkmail and Campus Cruiser, the College will use Hawk Alert in case of emergencies or closures. Please subscribe to HCC’s text messaging service as this will be one of the communication tools used by the college in the event of a closure if a flu pandemic occurs. [http://www.hccfl.edu/alerts/](http://www.hccfl.edu/alerts/)

As the President’s letter suggests, you may be the first to hear from students that they have symptoms or may have been diagnosed with the flu. **Please, let your Dean know of these instances.**

**SUGGESTED RESPONSE FOR FACULTY TO STUDENTS:** Thank them for letting you know, and reinforce that they are to stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever subsides without the assistance of fever reducing medicine. Provide whatever support you can to the students to assist them in catching up with coursework.

If a student does inform you about having flu symptoms or having been diagnosed with the flu, you may wish to inform the other students in the class:

**SUGGESTED RESPONSE:** You may inform your class that one or more of their classmates have reported to you that they have a suspected or confirmed case of the H1N1 (swine) flu. **For the students’ privacy and in compliance with health privacy laws, do not say the names of the students or give information that would reveal the students’ identity.** If classmates ask, please say that you are not at liberty to say, but you wanted the class to be informed so that they may monitor their own symptoms in the coming days.

Please reinforce the steps students should take both as a precaution and to prevent the spread of the flu - particularly in classes where a student has self-identified a positive diagnosis as good hygiene remains an effective tool in the spread of germs. Suggested precautions include the following:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues away after use. After coughing or sneezing, please do not touch “common” surfaces such as door knobs, key boards, stair rails, or table tops until you have washed your hands or sanitized them with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- 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 are easily spread that way.

- Stay home if you get sick.

- Visit the HCC link on the flu and/or the CDC website ([http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/#stay_healthy](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/#stay_healthy)) for additional information.
Please be reassured that Sodexo is being very vigilant in their cleaning. The H1N1 germs live only 2-8 hours on surfaces and are destroyed by several chemical germicides which are in the cleaning products used by Sodexo.

I am concerned for the health and safety of all our students, faculty and staff, but I do believe that by working and planning together, we have the chance to minimize the risk to all.

I encourage you to continue working with your deans to ensure that you have plans for maintaining communication with students and possibly continuing your classes in case you get the flu or in case the pandemic reaches a level where we possibly have to close the college or a campus. Finally, please recognize that this is a dynamic situation. The College is in regular contact with the Hillsborough County Health Department and is monitoring updates from the Centers from Disease Control. Instructions may change in the future, depending on the severity of the H1N1 virus here in the Tampa Bay region. We will inform you of any change in College planning as soon as possible. Thank you.

Craig R. Johnson