

ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE IMPLEMENTS H1N1 INFLUENZA ACTION PLAN

Contact: Brad Nason
Vice President/Dean for Student Life
Phone: (406) 657-1018
Email: nasonb@rocky.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BILLINGS – In response to the ongoing H1N1 influenza situation happening across the globe, Rocky Mountain College, in collaboration with RiverStone Health, has implemented an action plan to help protect its campus community and the public using campus facilities, RMC President Michael Mace announced today.

“We are monitoring this closely,” said Mace. “We will do everything possible to insure student safety in compliance with the guidelines we’ve been provided by RiverStone Health and our own crisis management plan.”

The plan includes comprehensive cleaning of high traffic areas; providing protective measures throughout campus, like common area germicide dispensers; distributing individual cleaning and information kits to all residents on campus; and communication with students, faculty, staff, parents and the public.

“RiverStone Health and Rocky Mountain College have the same goals -- keeping students, faculty and staff healthy,” said Lil Anderson, Yellowstone County Health Officer and CEO/President of RiverStone Health. “By working together, we come closer to achieving those goals during influenza season.”

Communication with students, staff, faculty and parents was launched via the campus Web site explaining the College’s plan of action and providing information on the virus and how to deal with it.

An online self-reporting system was launched, which has already been used by a dozen students, according to Katie Minick, RMC director of housing & residence life. The self-reporting system permits College personnel to monitor students who are ill.

Students who believe they have H1N1 influenza are referred to local health care providers.

“We are ready to assist our students in any way we can,” Nason said. “We’re a close knit campus so students look out for one another, but we’re also here to ensure that ill students get to the proper health care providers if necessary,” he said.

Parents were being sent a letter detailing RMC’s plan to address with H1N1 influenza within the student population.

RMC has been informed it has one student confirmed as contracting H1N1 influenza. That student was not on campus and the confirmation came from Wyoming. There have been four additional students diagnosed with influenza, not H1N1. Results from seven other students tested are pending, according to Brad Nason, RMC vice president and dean for student life.

Based on a recommendation from RiverStone Health, the College has shut down areas identified as possible sources for contamination, including the weight room in the Fortin Education Center. That room will be thoroughly cleaned with a bleach concentrate, recommended as the most potent cleansing agent, and will be cleaned twice daily. Other public areas will receive similar frequent cleaning in accordance with Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention and FDA guidelines.

Germicide dispensers were already placed in public areas, near drinking fountains, and other high traffic areas. Information sheets about the flu symptoms and precautions have been distributed throughout campus.

Special kits, including masks, plastic gloves, wiping cloths and germicide dispensers, are being distributed to every resident in campus housing. Resident hall advisors are also being provided with cleaning kits to clean common areas in the residence halls.

President Mace called an emergency meeting of College administrators to work on details of the plan, which included a representative from Sodexo, the College food service provider. Sodexo has a comprehensive protocol for handling H1N1.

When seasonal influenza vaccine is available, students will receive free inoculations as they have in the past, according to Nason. The inoculations are also available to faculty and staff for a nominal fee.

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