Coronavirus Information for the Wells Community

Tuesday, March 3, 2020

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

In recent days you have no doubt read about the global outbreak of the COVID-19 respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus that originated in Asia and has spread to many countries on several continents. While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that “the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low” for the United States, it is still important to remain vigilant about the disease and take precautions to prevent it from spreading further.

Spring Break Travel

As the campus prepares for spring break, which begins this weekend, many in our community will be traveling away from campus to destinations other than home. We are encouraging you to carefully consider your specific destination(s), and to assess potential risks of your planned travel. In particular, students from large metro areas might consider staying on campus during spring break.

We strongly discourage travel to international locations that have been significantly impacted by the spread of COVID-19 and have been given a Level 3 (warning) or Level 2 (alert) status by the CDC, including China, Iran, Italy, Japan and South Korea. According to the New York State Department of Health, any persons visiting these countries will be asked upon their return to enter a self-imposed quarantine at their home location and notify their local health department.

In addition to the heightened danger of virus transmission in these and other areas, there is the potential that you may be subjected to increased scrutiny at border crossings or encounter restrictions upon your freedom of movement that may interrupt your trip and/or your return to the U.S.

Basic Precautions

COVID-19 has an incubation period of up to 14 days, meaning that individuals may be contagious without showing any symptoms or feeling sick. Although there have been only two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New York state thus far, the following precautions are recommended for preventing the disease—and are the same common-sense practices that help prevent seasonal flu and many other illnesses:

• Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
• Avoid close contact with people who are sick—and if you are sick yourself, stay home.
• Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
• Avoid large crowds and keep at least 3 feet from other people when outdoors or when someone nearby is visibly sick.

Wherever your travels take you this spring break, stay healthy and safe with these additional tips from CDC Travelers’ Health.

What to Do If You Are Sick

The CDC advises that, if you’re not feeling well after your trip, call your doctor and tell them where you have traveled, including where you went and what you did on your trip. Do not make an unscheduled visit to an urgent care facility or a doctor’s office without calling ahead. You may have picked up a virus or other infection during your trip, even though you did not have symptoms until you returned.

The College’s Community Medical Center will be operating under its normal hours during spring break, and may be reached at 315.364.3273 or 315.364.3388. During times when the center is closed, the emergency number is 888.586.8342.

Conclusion

In the meantime, please take this opportunity to familiarize yourself with the COVID-19 situation. Some good sources of information on the virus are:

• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
• CDC “Travelers’ Health” site
• World Health Organization
• New York State Department of Health
  o NYSDOH Coronavirus Hotline: 888.364.3065

My senior leadership team and I are collaborating with the Community Medical Center, which is being advised directly by the Cayuga County and New York State health departments. Our team will continue to monitor the situation closely and are preparing contingency plans in the event that we experience COVID-19 cases in our region.

As many of you will be traveling next week, I encourage you to watch your email account for further updates.

Jonathan Gibraltar
President