

MSU Campus Community:

In an effort to keep our campus regularly updated about the health concerns that have recently been in the news, we wanted to provide you with the following update and sources of credible information.

For the past few weeks, MSU leadership has been monitoring the various health aspects of both the normal wave of common cold and flu, as well as meeting regularly regarding the recent coronavirus news. In staying informed about both issues, we have been in regular contact with health care providers, including St. Claire HealthCare, and other health care groups and agencies.

It is important to note that MSU has updated emergency preparedness planning related to the outbreak of respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus (n-CoV), also known as COVID-19, which was first detected in China and is now present in a number of countries, including the United States. We have also been doing extra cleaning of several parts of campus to try to tamp down the common cold, flu and other viruses that are prevalent this time of year.

As of noon today (Monday, March 9), only a small number of cases of the novel coronavirus had been confirmed in Kentucky. Governor Andy Beshear confirmed the cases and reminds all Kentuckians to continue to take preventative measures. Information about current confirmed cases in Kentucky and further guidance can be found at <https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/pages/covid19.aspx>. Additional information about reported cases in the U.S. may be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

We remind employees and students regardless of where you are to continue appropriate preventative measures as you would for the cold and flu. These include handwashing with soap and water; disinfecting surfaces including your desk, tables and door handles; covering coughs and sneezes; and avoiding shaking hands.

MSU measures to limit risk

As in any regular semester, this spring we have a significant population of student, faculty, staff, and visitors on our campus. This is good in the fact that it makes us a vibrant, working, constantly moving campus – and that is what a university is. In thinking about this spring semester, we have over 30% of all our courses normally delivered online. This is important to mention because we feel this is helpful in lowering our overall risk. Another measure we have taken to reduce our overall risk is to suspend all university-supported international travel until May 1, 2020 in order to further evaluate international programs. We will make determinations regarding education abroad programs and university international travel planned for after May 1 closer to that time.

Looking ahead, and with spring break coming up quickly at the end of this week, many people will be traveling throughout the region, our state, and to other areas for various reasons. The CDC has guidelines for traveling that will help you plan your travel and help keep you well informed, and we encourage you to review those at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.

Specific to MSU academic programs, we have a contingent of students who are engaged in STEM areas, particularly studying within one or more of our very high quality medical and health preparation programs. As a result of the curricular requirements in these areas, some of our students have involvement in off-campus clinical rotations, practicums, and other laboratory activities in medical care facilities, nursing homes, and other health-based facilities within our region and beyond. We would urge those students, and faculty/staff who may be supporting them, to take the normal precautions, but to also be vigilant and follow the extra precautions recommended for health care providers. Our faculty and staff who supervise these areas are professionals themselves and are familiar with these protocols.

Advice of medical/health community

In passing along the advice of trained medical/health professionals both on and off of our campus, we believe the best advice for our campus community is to listen to the advice of the medical community – that is to educate yourself on the facts and exercise both the normal and extra precautions.

In exercising those cautions, should you at any time believe you have had contact with someone who has the novel coronavirus or if you have been exposed in some way, please call the public health department in the county in which you reside and are located. It is often best to call them so that they can advise you according to the most accurate and up-to-date information regarding your area. You may also wish to contact your normal personal or family physician for advice.

In the case of those residing in Morehead/Rowan County, the Health Department may be reached at 606-784-8954. If you do not have access to a personal or family physician, or cannot reach the health department, our MSU Office of Counseling & Health Services is available at 606-783-2055.

While a provider can give you more information, some of the basic symptoms you should watch out for, and that may appear 2-14 days after exposure, are fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

If you develop symptoms **AND** you feel you have been in close contact with a person known to have the coronavirus, or live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of the virus, then seek medical advice. **Call ahead** before you go to a doctor's office, emergency room, or the clinic. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.

Looking forward, stay focused

Again, we are a vibrant, working, and constantly changing University community - and hope to stay that way. Our stance on the recent health issue is one in which we want to base our communication and information on what multiple health professionals advise us of, and we

would encourage our campus community to logically approach this health aspect and not engage in speculation, rumor, or panic.

As the situation across the nation evolves, and it may potentially evolve more in Kentucky, we will keep you updated, and would ask our campus community to equally keep us updated should you know anything. We have provided many credible resources at <http://www.moreheadstate.edu/coronavirus> and will continue to update the page as additional information is made available.

Part of our planning is based on protocol, and should someone in our region, or who has been on our campus encounter a known issue -- be confirmed positive through a medical test -- we will work with the appropriate health officials to work through it using their professional expertise in guiding us.

In summary, let's approach this recent health news with common sense, precaution, medical advice, and not through social media, rumor, or unconfirmed stories.

Our Eagle community is very resilient, very well adept to meet challenges, and will remain focused. For the meantime, and until we receive information from professionals to lead us in a different direction, we will remain focused on this spring semester, a quality educational environment for our students and their success.

Students, as you depart campus later this week for spring break, please be careful and have a good spring break!

Jay Morgan
MSU President