

VDH Interim Guidance for Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Infection: College and University Settings

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) acknowledges the concerns of colleges and universities in the state, as many support international programs for students and faculty, raising potential for imported cases of 2019-nCoV on Virginia campuses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has not yet released guidance specifically for college and university settings, but faculty, students and staff seeking general information may visit the [VDH](#) and [CDC](#) websites for the most current information. VDH recommends that colleges and universities take the general steps outlined below to prepare for and respond to any impacts of the 2019-nCoV outbreak.

Prepare:

- Review current plans for outbreaks and pandemics that your college/university has already developed. Consider including administration, emergency preparedness/planners, student health services and facilities staff in these discussions. Consider including a representative who can speak to the concerns of minority students in this planning meeting. You may also want to include a representative from your local health department. Please establish contact with your [local health department](#) so you know who to contact with questions.
- Review and/or develop a plan that allows students to stay home if they have recently returned from mainland China (other than Hubei Province) and do not have symptoms (i.e., self-quarantine), or to stay home if they are symptomatic and being evaluated for or are diagnosed with 2019-nCoV infection but do not require hospitalization (i.e., self-isolate).
 - Both self-quarantine and self-isolation should occur in a single room with a private bathroom. This could entail moving the impacted student or having a roommate relocate depending on the housing scenario.
 - Given the many potential contacts if a student breaks self-isolation in a congregate setting, it may be beneficial to have a certain floor, dorm or other housing area set up to accommodate such situations.
 - Consider arrangements for having meals delivered to the student that can minimize being in public places and close contact with others.
 - Consider taking other steps to allow them to stay quarantined/isolated, such as ensuring internet access or distance learning options so that they can stay involved with their studies.
 - Ensure that students who are self-quarantining/self-isolating have their absences excused.
 - Ensure that students who are under self-quarantine/self-isolation have access to mental health services as needed.
 - If students under self-isolation must leave the room, provide masks and encourage them to use a mask when they are around other people.
 - Ensure that students who are under self-quarantine/self-isolation are educated about covering their cough/sneezes, washing hands, avoiding sharing of household items and calling for help should their condition (mental or physical) worsen.
 - Ensure that students who are under self-quarantine/self-isolation have access to laundry services, cleaning supplies and trash removal services.
- Review sick leave policies and develop a plan that allows faculty or staff who are self-quarantining or who are being evaluated for or are diagnosed with 2019-nCoV infection to stay home.

Educate:

- Provide clear and factual information to your community to reduce anxiety and fear. Guidance for students, faculty, and staff returning to college and university settings is the same as for other travelers.
 - Share CDC's [current guidance for travelers with your community](#).
 - On January 27, 2020, the CDC issued a [Level 3 Travel Advisory: Avoid all Nonessential Travel to China](#).
 - On February 2, 2020, The U.S. Department of State issued a [Level 4 Travel Advisory: Do Not Travel to China](#).
 - On February 2, 2020, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) implemented temporary measures to increase the ability to detect and contact the coronavirus proactively and aggressively. The measures are as follows:
 - Any U.S. citizen returning to the U.S. who has been in Hubei Province in the previous 14 days will be subject to up to 14 days of mandatory quarantine to ensure they're provided proper medical care and health screening and to minimize the risk of spreading the disease to others.
 - Any U.S. citizen returning to the U.S. who has been in the rest of mainland China within the previous 14 days will undergo proactive entry health screening at a select number of ports of entry and up to 14 days of monitored self-quarantine to ensure they have not contracted the virus and do not pose a public health risk.
 - Pursuant to Section 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, a Presidential Proclamation has been signed temporarily suspending the entry into the United States of foreign nationals. As a result, foreign nationals, other than immediate family of U.S. citizens and permanent residents, who have traveled to China within the last 14 days will be denied entry into the U.S. for this time.
 - CDC and VDH do not recommend that measures for quarantine and isolation be applied retrospectively to travelers who arrived from China before Sunday, February 2 at 5PM.
- It is currently the middle of flu season and VDH recommends that students, faculty and staff take the following actions to prevent the further spread of influenza and other respiratory germs especially because flu symptoms could be confused with symptoms of 2019-nCoV infection.
 - Get a flu vaccine
 - Practice good hand hygiene and cough etiquette
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
 - Take flu antivirals if prescribed by your healthcare provider if you have the flu
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick

- Stay home when you are sick
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Respond:

- Although CDC and VDH are not recommending that measures for quarantine and isolation be applied retrospectively to travelers who arrived from China before Sunday, February 2 at 5PM who are within 14 days of their last exposure:
 - Because schools have congregate living situations, some may elect to deviate from public health recommendations and apply the quarantine and isolation measures to individuals arriving from China before Sunday, February 2 at 5PM and within 14 days of their last exposure.
 - If individuals arriving from China before Sunday, February 2 at 5PM and within 14 days since their last exposure are identified, the local health department can work with schools to assess high risk situations that might initiate facilities to deviate from CDC recommendations regarding quarantine or isolation of these individuals.
- If a student, faculty or staff member with recent travel to China becomes ill with possible symptoms of 2019-nCoV infection (e.g., fever, cough, or difficulty breathing), the person should be medically evaluated as soon as possible.
- If a student or staff member with recent travel to China or recent exposure to someone with confirmed 2019-nCoV infection becomes ill with symptoms of 2019-nCoV infection (e.g., fever, cough, or difficulty breathing), they should be medically evaluated as soon as possible and encouraged not to come to school until they have been evaluated.
- If a student or staff member with recent travel to China or recent exposure to someone with confirmed 2019-nCoV infection becomes ill at school, the person should be provided a mask and isolated in a private room until they can seek care or be picked up by a parent. The ill person should not take public transportation (e.g., subway, bus, taxi, ride share). If emergency transport is needed, notify EMS that the ill student/staff member could have 2019-nCoV infection based on symptoms and possible exposure.
- If 2019-nCoV testing is pursued, VDH recommends that close contacts monitor themselves for symptoms while testing is being conducted. The local health department can work with you to help identify close contacts.
- Close contacts should:
 - Monitor for symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing) for 14 days since last contact with the person.
 - Take their temperature twice a day.
 - Contact a healthcare provider if they develop symptoms and let them know about their close contact with someone who is being evaluated for 2019-nCoV infection. Whenever possible, they should call ahead before seeing a healthcare provider.
 - A close contact is defined as being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters), or within the room of a 2019-nCoV patient under investigation for a prolonged period of time; close contact can include caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a room with a 2019-nCoV patient under investigation. Household and intimate contacts are always considered close contacts.
 - See CDC's updated [Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients Under Investigation for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#).
 - Data to inform the definition of close contact are limited. Considerations when assessing close contact include the duration of exposure (e.g., longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk) and the clinical symptoms of the person with 2019-nCoV (e.g.,

coughing likely increases exposure risk as does exposure to a severely ill patient). Special consideration should be given to those exposed in health care settings.

Student Health Services:

- Review infection prevention and control policies and [CDC infection control recommendations for 2019-nCoV](#) specifically considering:
 - [The criteria to guide evaluation of patients under investigation \(PUI\) for 2019-nCoV.](#)
 - Review [specimen collection guidelines for PUIs](#) as a lower respiratory tract, upper respiratory tract and serum specimens will be requested.
 - Assessment and triage of patients with acute respiratory symptoms.
 - Consider a nurse line so that students can call ahead.
 - Patient placement - Suspect patients should be seen in private exam rooms.
 - Ensure adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies, including masks, for staff and patients. Consider ordering thermometers for contacts who may be self-monitoring.
 - Source control measures for patients:
 - Provide a facemask to suspect patients.
 - Consider having the patient enter through a back entrance and not the main waiting area.
 - Place the patient in a private room immediately.
 - Know how to report a potential 2019-nCoV case to public health officials.
 - Ensure you have business and after-hours contact information for your local health department.