

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 1, 2009**

**For More Information Contact**

Phil Giaramita (804) 864-7008 or (804) 652-5997

## **PROBABLE NEW H1N1 FLU CASES AT WASHINGTON AND LEE**

(RICHMOND, Va.)— State Health Commissioner Karen Remley, M.D., MBA, said today that there are two probable cases of infection with the new influenza A (H1N1) virus, also called “swine flu,” at Washington and Lee University in Lexington.

“Both students had mild illnesses, both are recovering well, and both were suspected early of possibly having influenza A (H1N1) and were appropriately treated,” said Dr. Remley. “Neither student had traveled outside the country, but both had visited other states recently. None of the states visited were known to have confirmed cases of influenza A (H1N1).”

“Given the fact that college and university students tend to travel frequently and are involved in many social activities, cases on a college campus are not unexpected. However, the appearance of two probable cases on the same campus increases the possibility that transmission has occurred locally and prompted me to release this information in an abundance of caution,” said Dr. Remley.

The Virginia Department of Health does not release information on probable cases unless there is public health reason to do so, as is the case here.

Washington and Lee President Kenneth P. Ruscio said, “We are working very closely with the Department of Health to make sure our students stay healthy so they can continue to focus on their studies. I am very pleased with the University’s response to this challenge and am thankful for our exceptional Student Health Center.”

VDH has been working closely with W&L investigating these probable cases and has been impressed with the exceptional job the University has done in caring for these students, in educating students and others about the risks of influenza A (H1N1), and in minimizing risks to others. VDH and W&L are continuing to work together to ensure all appropriate control measures are being taken.

Today, Dr. Remley wrote an open letter to all college and university students throughout the Commonwealth, noting the presence of the H1N1 virus in the state, emphasizing the value of seeking immediate medical care if symptomatic and asking students to assist in preventing the spread of the influenza A (H1N1) virus.

Dr. Remley said the state will continue to work closely with all community partners as part of its long-standing emergency response plan. “In addition to our interaction with colleges and universities, our local health districts are monitoring developments on an up-to-the-minute

basis and providing care and treatment guidance to clinicians, hospitals, and pharmacists,” she said.

The current H1N1 influenza outbreak is caused by an influenza A virus not previously detected in humans or animals. Symptoms are similar to those of seasonal flu and typically include fever, cough and sore throat. Additional symptoms may include headache, chills and fatigue. Persons with H1N1 influenza are contagious for up to seven days after the onset of illness and possibly longer if they are still symptomatic.

Dr. Remley advised anyone with these symptoms to protect themselves and their fellow students by:

- Staying home from work or school and limiting their contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Calling the Student Health Center or their health care providers before seeking care so that the necessary infection control measures can be put in place.
- Covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze and throwing the tissue in the trash after use.
- Washing their hands often with soap and water, especially after they cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective.
- Limiting close contact with sick people
- Preventing the spread of germs by not touching eyes, nose or mouth

VDH has established an information line at (877) ASK-VDH3, or (877) 275-8343, for anyone with concerns or questions about H1N1 influenza. The hotline is open 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, May 2 and May 3, and during weekdays from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

For further information consult the CDC’s Web site at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu) and the VDH Web site at [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov).

###