Preventing the Spread of Swine Flu

By Brian Cabezas and Tamar Soroker

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) continue to monitor the spread and effects of Novel 2009 H1N1 Influenza as flu season, generally from November to April, gets underway.

According to the CDC, most cases of H1N1 have been mild. However, severe cases and deaths have been linked to people who fall into high risk groups: people who are either over the age of 65 or under the age of 2; people with asthma or other respiratory illnesses; people with immune deficiency; people with heart complications or metabolic disorders; people with diabetes; people under the age of 19 who are on long-term aspirin therapy; and pregnant women.

Both the seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 vaccine are now available and the DOHMH and CDC are advising people to get vaccinated. People who fall into high risk categories, or are caregivers of those who fall into high risk categories, are especially encouraged to get the vaccine and receive priority in locations where the initial supply is limited. For information on where to obtain the vaccine, please visit the DOHMH’s H1N1 Vaccine Clinic Locator on our CUNY Flu Page www.cuny.edu/flu.

As for infection prevention, both the DOHMH and CDC recommend proper hand-washing, coughing and sneezing into a tissue or your elbow, and limiting contact with sick people as effective

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Athletic Insurance

By Zak Ivkovic with contributions from Terry Wansart (Hunter) and Steve Kelly (BMCC)

Insurance issues in athletics have been challenging administrators within the CUNY Athletic Conference for some time, and with the ever-increasing premiums and limited insurance companies to choose from, the challenge grows. An increase in the volume or severity of injuries could impact an athletic department’s budget significantly under the existing insurance practices.

Minimum insurance coverage for student-athletes is set by the

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National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and National Junior Collegiate Athletic Association (NJCAA).

As part of its membership benefits, the NCAA provides catastrophic coverage in cases exceeding $75,000, but the NJCAA has no equivalent program.

The 11 senior colleges in the CUNY system that offer intercollegiate sports have made significant strides in recent years to address the costly burden associated with providing insurance for student-athletes. To minimize risk, most have secured full-time athletic trainers who prevent injuries through pre-season preparation and assessment. The trainers also provide daily treatment for injuries, act as emergency medical responders, and develop post-injury protocols, including regular visits by physicians to the campuses. The campuses with dedicated athletic trainers helped their schools reduce both injury rates and insurance premiums.

In many cases, the premiums for coverage and high deductibles have caused costs to skyrocket. At the same time, the insurance companies require a significant amount of administrative effort and follow up before claims are processed. There are often lengthy delays in the billing process and many attempts to deny coverage.

One of the key risk management ingredients is prevention. Recently, the CUNY Athletic Conference was fortunate to secure the Hospital for Special Surgery (HSS) as a corporate sponsor. Among other benefits, an HSS orthopedist, Dr. Osric King, makes regular visits to campuses for screenings, diagnosis and treatment of injuries. This additional resource has been a significant benefit for athletic programs.

As CUNY's student population grows and athletic participation increases, prevention, insurance coverage, and other risk management efforts must keep pace.

About the Author

Mr. Zak Ivkovic is now in his 19th season with The City University of New York Athletic Conference (CUNYAC), and his fifth campaign as the conference’s Executive Director. After starting as the CUNYAC’s part-time Sports Information Director in 1990, he spent the seven years prior to his executive director appointment as an Interim Executive Director and Associate Director for the conference.
Initiation of CUNY’s Business Continuity Committee

"Business continuity" is the process of continuing critical functions during a sustained disruption. Although business continuity is already practiced throughout CUNY, a recent initiative centralized the process by forming a University-wide Committee. The Business Continuity Committee, which is composed of senior University officials and senior staff at each campus, was established to develop a set of standards and minimum expectations for practices, procedures and facilities to ensure the continuation of the University’s critical functions in the event of a sustained disruption.

Work on this issue has already begun. Last year, CUNY asked the New York State Technology Enterprise Corporation (NYSTEC) to conduct a Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan Gap Analysis. The study was completed and submitted on June 30, 2008, and the report serves as a foundation for some of the work of the newly formed Committee.

One particularly notable event for the Committee was the presentation by Rachel Stein Dickinson, Deputy Commissioner for Finance, Policy & Administration at the NYC Office of Emergency Management (OEM). At our July meeting, Commissioner Dickinson, who oversees OEM’s Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP), provided an overview of the City’s business continuity plan and OEM’s effort to implement Mayor Bloomberg’s Executive Order 107. Executive Order 107 requires that all NYC agencies have a business continuity plan in effect by the end of 2009. Commissioner Dickinson noted that OEM assists other agencies with business continuity training and exercises, and provides tools such as worksheets, a 24-hour support line, and planning guides. The University will continue working with Commissioner Dickinson in developing and implementing its business continuity plan.

Future plans for the Committee include selecting and implementing a business continuity tool that will help facilitate CUNY-wide business continuity efforts, and setting standards to help CUNY campuses develop their own business continuity plans. For updated University business continuity information, please visit (http://web.cuny.edu/administration/ehsrm/BusinessContinuityCommittee.html).

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means of preventing the spread of the virus. Colleges are being asked to post “Cover Your Cough/Wash Your Hands” flyers and update their communities as information becomes available.

Since the outbreak of H1N1 last spring, CUNY’s Infectious Disease Committee has been meeting regularly to update the University’s Protocol on Infectious Disease Notification and revise CUNY’s Influenza Response Plan, which was first developed in 2006 in response to the Avian Flu outbreak.

CUNY has also conducted conference calls with members of the DOHMH and the NYC Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to monitor the situation and discuss concerns. In late June, Nancy Clark, Assistant Commissioner of the NYC DOHMH’s Bureau of Environmental Disease Prevention Program, spoke at CUNY’s Risk Management Council about the DOHMH’s guidance for H1N1 influenza and fielded questions from the Council members and the Infectious Disease Committee.

Fire Safety Month

Are you prepared in case of fire? October was Fire Safety Month. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Install and test smoke detectors and sprinkler systems.
- Conduct periodic fire drills.
- Create and update detailed floor plans of buildings, and make them available to emergency personnel, resident advisors and students.
- In the event of a fire:
  - Get out of the building and stay out.
  - Crawl low under the smoke.
  - Feel doors for heat before opening them.
  - If your clothes catch on fire, cover your face and STOP, DROP, and ROLL.
  - And pull the fire alarm on your way out.


Risk Management Council Committee Updates

Travel and Transportation Committee
The Travel and Transportation Committee has completed its final draft of guidelines for those who sponsor and support student domestic trips as part of the curricular or extracurricular programs in CUNY. The guidelines are designed to help trip sponsors navigate all of the considerations as well as some of the legal liabilities that are involved in planning student trips. A subcommittee chaired by Jay Phaphouvaninh is working on a similar set of guidelines to deal with some of the special issues involved in international travel and study abroad.

Insurance Committee
The Insurance Committee has recommended changes to the University’s vehicle use policy and adoption of the New York State License Event Notification (LENS) Program for University drivers. The Committee has also urged consideration of a University-wide student accident insurance policy modeled on the successful program at Kingsborough Community College. Other issues reviewed by the group include insurance for art works and high-end equipment; insurance requirements for students participating in international programs; food safety requirements for student groups on campus; and special events insurance.

Emergency Management Committee
The Emergency Management Committee is engaging in discussions with the New York City Office of Emergency Management regarding a campus Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program in relation to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Student Services Committee
The Student Services Committee is working with Keeling and Associates. The consulting firm conducted a survey of CUNY’s health and counseling departments and is expected to continue to assist CUNY.

Infectious Disease Committee
In light of the H1N1 outbreak last spring, the Infectious Disease Committee has reviewed and updated CUNY’s Influenza Response Plan and CUNY’s Protocol on Infectious Disease Notification, which was disseminated to college presidents earlier this month.

How to Prevent Bed Bugs

Robert M. Pignatello, Senior Vice President of Finance and Administration at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, spoke at the November Risk Management Council Meeting on responding to a bed bug condition. VP Pignatello stressed the importance of educating and communicating with the campus community to minimize confusion and to address outstanding concerns.

Bed bugs are tiny insects that are typically carried in luggage, furniture, bedding, or clothing. They can grow to about the size of an apple seed but they generally hide in cracks which are smaller, and are therefore very difficult to detect. Although bed bugs and their bites are a nuisance, they are not known to spread disease.