Good Morning Chairwoman Stavisky and members of the New York State Senate Committee on Higher Education. I am Peter Jordan, Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at the City University of New York and I am on the job for a month now. In the interest of full disclosure though, I will tell you that during the last eight years, I served as chief student affairs officer for one of CUNY’s community colleges. Ladies and gentlemen, I appreciate this opportunity to share how the City University of New York is addressing student education about prevention and protocols for managing instances of H1N1 across our campuses.

At CUNY, we are fortunate not to have had major outbreaks of H1N1 on our campuses last spring or this fall. However, we take very seriously the fact that students, faculty and staff across our campuses are vulnerable to the H1N1 Influenza A pandemic sweeping the nation.
As you know, CUNY is an urban, commuter university in the heart of New York City. Students on our campuses have easy access to major health and medical facilities throughout the five boroughs. Working with the Departments of Health, we have identified those facilities within the communities where our students study, live and work that offer free H1N1 vaccines. In addition, we have stepped up our efforts to promote awareness and access to these facilities through the university and campus web sites, email blasts, posters, etc. The university’s H1N1 web site offers students, faculty and staff an H1N1 vaccine locator, which provides the location of H1N1 distribution centers by zip code. Effective immediately, high risk populations at CUNY now also have access to weekend vaccination center operated by New York City Department of Education, which are promoted through the CUNY H1N1 web site.

In addition, our students also have access to 18 campus health services offices that include trained staff members who are at the center of CUNY’s H1N1 prevention and care efforts. Our campus health services offices are the first points of contact for students, faculty and staff who are experiencing influenza-like symptoms. And the staff members in these offices are responsible for tracking and following up with any individual who presents these symptoms. These professionals also work closely with their campus’
chief student affairs officers to ensure confidential communication with individual faculty on students’ behalf. Every effort is made to ensure that students remain engage with their faculty and have the opportunity to make up assignments if they are absent because of flu symptoms.

As a major institution for higher learning, the City University of New York is not only unique because the majority of our students commute to our campuses from their homes and communities. Of the 23 institutions that make up CUNY, only four have students who reside in residence halls. These residents account for less than one percent (1,700) of the 260,000 degree students enrolled at CUNY campuses. However, these 1,700 resident students are high on the list of student populations that our university-wide H1N1 campaign target. Shortly, you will hear from John Holloway, Associate Dean of Student Affairs at Lehman College. He will speak briefly about some of our efforts with a small residential life program on his campus.

Our campus childcare centers are another source of CUNY’s uniqueness. While these centers operate as independent 501(c) 3 entities, they are at the heart of the plans we are executing. We are very concerned about the care of these children who range in ages from 6 months to 12 years. Therefore, our health services offices are aggressive in providing
information to educate student-parents about this pandemic and about locations for vaccines.

We have also amplified outreach efforts to other special populations that include student-veterans. There are nearly 3,000 student-veterans enrolled at CUNY campuses around the city. We are collaborating with the Veterans’ Administration and VA Hospitals to communicate with our student-veterans about the availability of the H1N1 vaccines at VA hospitals and other sites.

In closing, at CUNY, we are taking proactive steps to ensure the maintenance of healthy campus communities. I want to express our gratitude to the Senate’s higher education committee for its timely and well-placed focus on this important public health issue.