

Dear Families,

A message was sent earlier today to your student's Bennington email address. We are sharing this message with you now so that you also have this information and the College's planning around the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) and influenza. Please contact our [Student Health Center](#) or [Dr. Randy Anselmo](#) with any questions that you have. Our Student Health Center has limited hours during Field Work Term, but voicemail messages and emails are being checked daily. The Student Health Center will re-open for the term on Monday, February 17, 2020 at 9:00 am.

Best,

*Natalie Basil*

Dean of Students

## BENNINGTON COLLEGE

**TO:** Faculty, Staff, and Students

**FR:** Dr. Randy Anselmo, Director, Health Services

As we prepare for the opening of the spring term, we wanted to provide an update and information regarding the coronavirus (Covid-19), which remains low-risk in Vermont, and encourage proactive, preventative measures regarding the influenza virus, which is high-risk and present in our campus community.

It is human nature to have a fear response triggered when we see and hear news of illness outbreaks and potentially dangerous situations. It is important, and healthy, to take the necessary precautions to protect ourselves. We cannot, however, allow that fear to influence our values and change how we see and treat others in our community. We are committed to providing care, respect, and dignity to all individuals while addressing the needs of community safety.

If you have questions, please reach out to Health Services or Dr. Randy Anselmo.

### **Coronavirus**

The novel coronavirus (Covid-19) situation continues to evolve and we continue to utilize our resources through the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Vermont Department of Health (VTDOH) to inform our preparation and response planning for campus. At this time, the imminent risk of the virus to Vermont remains at low and, as of February 11, 2020, Vermont reports no confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus in the state. The College is prepared to implement the recommendations of the VTDOH in the unlikely event that an individual tests positive for the novel coronavirus while on campus.

### **Influenza**

Influenza, or the flu, is present in Vermont. We remain at a high-risk level and are predicting an increase in the spreading of the influenza virus in the coming weeks. We encourage all community members to take measures to protect themselves to prevent the spread of this virus, which are outlined below.

### **What you can do**

#### *Students*

- If you have a fever and/or respiratory illness symptoms such as a cough or shortness of breath,

please call Health Services. Health Services will conduct a screening and evaluation. Calling, rather than walking in, allows a clinician to screen on the phone for any risk factors, make appointments (if needed), share information and limit the spread of any illness.

- Please do not self-diagnose. If you have any concerns, please be in touch with Health Services.

#### *Faculty and staff*

- If you develop a fever or respiratory-illness symptoms such as a cough or shortness of breath, please stay home and contact your primary care provider and/or SVMC ExpressCare for screening and recommendations.

#### **Everyone**

Both the influenza virus and the novel coronavirus have similar recommendations for prevention and protection:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home and away from public places when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Additionally, it is recommended to get a flu shot if you have not already done so this season. The closest place to campus to receive a flu shot is Hannaford's Pharmacy.

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