Dear Members of the Lehigh Community:

As we prepare for the start of the spring semester, we understand that you may be concerned about the possibility of the spread of the flu, which has recently received significant media attention.

We are continually monitoring the situation and preparing for the probable arrival of this flu. The Health and Wellness Center had three confirmed cases of influenza in December, and we are anticipating more cases early in the new semester. Our goal is to minimize the consequences of this illness on our campus and educational mission.

We continue to follow the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), particularly the recommendations for reducing transmission. We remind members of the campus community to take precautions as outlined by the CDC on their website at http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm

These basic guidelines include simple precautions such as washing hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers when water is not available. Because it is important to wash hands before preparing or eating food, the university has installed hand sanitizer dispensers outside dining halls. There are also hand sanitizers at athletic facilities across campus.

The CDC also reminds us that anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms should avoid close contact with others as much as possible. That means not going to class or social gatherings for at least 24 hours after the fever breaks (with no anti-fever medications).

It is recommended that faculty and staff members do not report to work until it has been 24 hours without a fever, without taking fever-reducing medications.

The Lehigh University Health and Wellness Center held flu clinics this past fall and provided flu shots for everyone who wanted one, vaccinating 300 members of the campus community. Given that there has been significant recent media attention about the flu outbreak, we are hopeful that many other students took action to get vaccinated at home during break. Although there are no longer flu shots available at the Health Center, there are vaccines available in proximity to campus (locations listed at http://flushot.healthmap.org/).

Additionally, the Bethlehem Health Bureau will be providing flu shots on a walk-in basis from 1 to 3 p.m. Monday, January 14th at 10 E. Church St. in Bethlehem. Cost is $10, payable by cash or check. Please note that there is a 10- to 14-day period before the vaccine will become effective.
The Health Center can prescribe Tamiflu, which may lessen the duration and intensity of the symptoms, but this must be done within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms in order to be effective.

Lehigh students who develop symptoms of fever of at least 100 degrees F, with a sore throat and/or cough, are encouraged to stay out of class and take over-the-counter medications (more information is available at http://www.lehigh.edu/health/flu.shtml). Students who wish to be seen should call the university's Health and Wellness Center at 610-758-3870. Appointments are available 8:15 to 4:30 weekdays, and 10:00 to 2:00 on Saturday for emergencies.

If medical attention is needed beyond those hours, students are advised to call the Lehigh University Police Department at 610-758-4200.

As always, we encourage students to come to campus with a first aid kit that includes a thermometer and medications for fever and aches, and to consider bringing Gatorade and other fluids in order to stay hydrated. Other suggestions for the kit can be found at http://www.lehigh.edu/health/wellness.shtml

Families who are able to bring their sick son or daughter home to recuperate will be encouraged to do so. Students who are ill prior to the start of the spring semester should stay home until at least 24 hours after the fever breaks before travelling to campus.

Students who become ill and miss class because they must remain isolated for a period of several days should contact their instructors to obtain relevant class information. We encourage faculty to work directly with students regarding absences. Makeup opportunities are determined at the discretion of faculty.

We encourage you to visit the webpage of the Lehigh Health and Wellness Center at www.lehigh.edu/health for updated information.

Sincerely,
Dr. Susan Kitei
Director
Lehigh University Health and Wellness Center