August 28, 2009

Dear FAMU Parents:

The H1N1 Influenza Pandemic continues to be an ongoing health concern across the U.S. Unlike seasonal flu outbreaks which primarily affect the very young (under age 5) and the very old, the H1N1 virus appears to target children and young adults under age 25. Student health centers at many of Florida’s universities are dealing with this outbreak and FAMU is no exception. We are currently experiencing an increase in the number of students seeking medical attention who are diagnosed with the flu. The health and well-being of our students is our primary concern and we are asking for your assistance to help minimize the impact of this pandemic on our campus.

Because the H1N1 virus is novel (never seen before) it is highly transmissible. Fortunately, most cases are resolved without serious complications. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) individuals with a higher risk for complications have other medical conditions including; cardiovascular disease, asthma, cancer, immunosuppressive conditions, respiratory problems, liver disease, diabetes and obesity. Women that are pregnant also have greater risk for complications.

Prevention is our greatest defense against H1N1. Please encourage your student to take measures to minimize their exposure and stay healthy. We have implemented an education campaign on campus to ensure that all members of the FAMU community are aware of the following flu prevention steps as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue and throw it away when finished.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are unavailable.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Avoid contact with others that appear sick. Influenza is spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home if you feel sick or have symptoms of influenza and see your physician.
Include hand sanitizer and a thermometer with your student’s personal first aid supplies. As we get closer to our traditional flu season (October – March) encourage your student to get a flu shot. Student Health Services will offer seasonal flu vaccine to students at no charge. It is anticipated that the H1N1 flu vaccine will be available later this fall. Distribution will be distributed based on guidelines established by the CDC and the Florida Department of Health. We will share information about this vaccine as it becomes available.

For more information about the H1N1 influenza pandemic go to www.flu.gov. Important information for our campus will be posted on the main website www.famu.edu. You may also call the campus message line at 1-877-325-6397. We appreciate your support and cooperation as we prepare for the upcoming fall academic semester.

Sincerely,

James H. Ammons
President