To: The Alvernia University Community
From: Joseph J. Cicala, Ph.D., Vice President for University Life
Subject: 2009 H1N1 Flu, aka “Swine Flu”
Date: August 24, 2009

The University has plans in place and under ongoing review for response, if necessary, to an outbreak of H1N1 flu or other infectious disease. This communication is intended to brief you on the basics of the University’s plans and to offer additional information that may be helpful. A variety of materials about prevention and precaution also will be forthcoming this week from our Health and Wellness Center.

Symptoms associated with H1N1 flu are fever above 101 degrees, lethargy, lack of appetite, and coughing.

Faculty or staff members who experience these symptoms are asked to seek diagnosis – and, if necessary, treatment and directions for preventing further spread of disease – from their health care providers. Faculty or staff members who are diagnosed with swine flu or any other infectious disease that would present a threat to others are asked to consult with their department chairs or supervisors in order to make arrangements for any necessary time away from the University for recovery and to prevent the spread of disease to others.

Students who experience these symptoms are asked to go as quickly as possible to the Health and Wellness Center, on the lower level of Veronica Hall. (During weekend or evening hours, resident students should contact their RAs for assistance.)

If our Health Services staff believes the student may have H1N1 flu or any other disease that may present a threat to others, procedures for formal diagnosis will be initiated and, in the interim, the student will be directed by our University Life Division to cease attending classes and, if a resident, leave University housing*, in keeping with our procedures for interim involuntary medical leave, as outlined in our Student Handbook, available for review at www.alvernia.edu. (Student Success staff will work with faculty members to help students continue with their academic work remotely, as appropriate.)

*If it is impossible for the student to return to his or her home for this interim period, our Residence Life staff will work to identify an appropriate space to which the student may temporarily be housed but present no threat to others.

If neither H1N1 flu nor any other infectious disease that would present a threat to others is diagnosed, the student will be allowed to return to University housing and/or classes. If H1N1 flu or any other infectious disease that would present a threat to others is diagnosed, the student’s involuntary medical leave will remain in place until the student is cleared for return in keeping with the procedures that will be outlined for the student when the interim involuntary medical withdrawal is initiated.

Procedures are in place for extraordinary cleaning that may be necessary if a resident student is diagnosed with H1N1 flu or any other infectious disease that would present a threat to others. Those procedures would involve the bagging and removal of the student’s belongings and a thorough cleaning of the student’s and any shared space in the residences. The University asks that any roommates who may be temporarily inconvenienced by such measures understand and cooperate with the University’s efforts to strive to prevent disease that may affect them or others.

Members of the University community are encouraged to wash hands often and thoroughly, to cover mouths and noses when coughing or sneezing, and respect others’ personal spaces.

Plans are being made to administer “regular” seasonal flu vaccinations on campus, as usual. It is possible that supplies may be limited nationwide this year. If that is the case, our priority will be high-risk students (i.e., those with chronic medical conditions). We are awaiting direction from the Pennsylvania Department of Health regarding vaccine for H1N1 flu, currently expected to be available mid-to-late October, with two administrations over a period of several weeks necessary for a successful vaccination. It is not yet clear if the vaccines will be available to individual providers or health centers or if local “vaccination centers” will be set up. We will advise you further when we know.

The University’s Pandemic Planning Team continues to communicate so that additional factors and plans may continue to be monitored and developed, as need be. Questions or suggestions may be directed to Vice President for Finance and Administration Doug Smith (610.796.5600; doug.smith@alvernia.edu) or to me (610.796.8211; joe.cicala@alvernia.edu).