

Coronavirus Updates

Austin College Faculty, Staff, and Students

Many have asked about local efforts with the corona virus situation, so I wanted to provide a campus update.

At the beginning of February I participated in a teleconference with Texas Department of Health Services (DSHS) for educational institutions for corona virus. The following are key points from the call:

- The virus, although not present so much in the US, would be spreading
- We should maintain close contact with the local health department for questions and resources for any suspected cases
- Testing is coordinated through the health department under guidance of CDC
- Preparedness is just like the preparedness for influenza outbreaks
- Clean frequently touched surfaces frequently
- Encourage hand washing, avoiding touching face/eyes/mucus membranes

I've maintained a close contact with the Grayson County Health Department and touched base with the director after this teleconference. We've agreed that I will contact them for questions concerning any of our (potential) student exposures or concerns. Testing would be coordinated through the health department and management of any suspected infections will be at their direction based on individual history, symptoms, and need for medical care.

Should a case arise requiring isolation of some sort, the case will be managed in tandem between me and the Grayson county Health Department. Established protocols will be followed as necessary. We will communicate with the campus as needed.

Please be aware that more immediate health concern for this community is **influenza**. The flu is contagious 3-5 days *before* symptoms and 3-5 days after symptoms improve. Current antiviral medication *does not* prevent spread of the illness. Those medications can make you feel better sooner. That means you should still stay home for 5 days after start of symptoms. Prevention guidelines for any illness is:

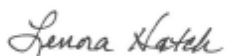
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water 20 seconds or use of liberal amounts of 60% alcohol hand wash solution. Use paper towels to dry hands after soap and water.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces frequently– this would include cell phones. Simple Clorox type wipes can be used to clean the cell phone. This type of wipe does not damage the glass or the camera.
- Cover cough and sneeze. We may need to gently remind others to do so.
- Stay home if sick or have fever greater than 99.9 (flu infections do not always have a high fever)
- Don't touch your face/eyes/mucus membranes.

[The CDC](#) is an excellent resource for up to date information.

CDC 2/25/2020 Situation in U.S.:

"Imported cases of COVID-19 in travelers have been [detected in the U.S.](#) Person-to-person spread of COVID-19 also has been seen among close contacts of returned travelers from Wuhan, but at this time, this virus is NOT currently spreading in the community in the United States."

I hope you found this information helpful.



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