

## University Continues to Monitor Novel Coronavirus

January 30, 2020

Dear Members of the University Community,

In collaboration with UR Medicine physicians and the Monroe County Health Department, University Health Service (UHS) continues to closely monitor the novel coronavirus outbreak. On Thursday, Jan. 30, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a [global health emergency](#), although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) still considers the risk of it spreading in the U.S. as [low](#).

Our concern at the University has been the potential for travel-imported cases from the affected regions, but through our monitoring and screening processes that concern has diminished. We have **no indication** that novel coronavirus is or has been present on any of our University campuses. The University will continue to actively monitor the novel coronavirus for as long as it is a public health issue. We are prepared to implement appropriate plans and established protocols should the disease escalate locally, and the University's Office of Environmental Health and Safety is continuously monitoring the situation in conjunction with the relevant local, state, and national public health authorities.

Additionally, I'd like to clarify the distinction between screening and testing. Screening is the evaluation we have been conducting with any member of the University community who meets the double criteria of presenting the symptoms of respiratory illness and having recently traveled back from a region where the coronavirus outbreak has occurred, currently limited to China. Testing occurs when a physician completes a screening and, along with public health authorities, determines there is a potential for infection. The individual's blood and respiratory samples are then sent to an approved facility for medical testing. To date, dozens of individuals at the University have been screened, and no one at the University or in Monroe County has needed to be tested.

Currently, there are no known University students, faculty, or staff in China on University-sponsored or supported activity. Global Engagement is providing specific guidance and recommendations to units and individual travelers who have upcoming or planned travel to China. Multiple upcoming travelers who liaised with Global Engagement have modified their plans and postponed travel to China. The increase in CDC and U.S. Department of State Travel notices for China now makes the country a "high-risk destination" according to the UR International Travel and Program Development Policy, thus requiring pre-approval from the UR Travel Review Subcommittee if the UR-affiliated trip includes students.

### WHAT TO DO MOVING FORWARD

**Let Global Engagement know of your international travel plans.** They can provide you with the latest guidance and possible travel restrictions. (585)275-8699; <http://www.rochester.edu/global/travel>

#### **For anyone who recently returned from China:**

If you develop respiratory symptoms or fever within 14 days of travel, please call UHS at (585) 275-2662 for phone consultation before you visit UHS. If you are a medical center employee, please call Employee Health at (585) 487-1010

Communication about Coronavirus, January 30, 2020

**Speak to professionals here at the University if you have any questions at all about the coronavirus.** Staff members in the following offices are prepared to talk through your concerns, provide the latest status updates, and answer any questions from students, faculty, and staff.

- [University Health Service](#): (585) 275-2662: The UHS website has up-to-date information on coronavirus.
- [Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine](#): On the Medical Center campus at (585) 487-1010.

**Stay healthy.** Public health professionals view the common influenza (also known as seasonal flu) to have a much greater impact in our area area than novel coronavirus. Simple measures can help lower your risk of getting many illnesses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water (20 seconds of scrubbing).
- Cough/sneeze into a tissue. Dispose of used tissues immediately into a trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough/sneeze into your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, which accelerates the spread of infections.
- Avoid close contact with others who are sick. If you are sick, avoid contact with others, including parties, meetings, and events.
- Get your flu vaccine—it's not too late to benefit from it. Students may still receive the vaccine at UHS.

**Learn more.** WXXI Radio broadcast an hour-long program about novel coronavirus on Thursday, January 30, featuring two University of Rochester medical experts. You can access the program online at: <https://www.wxxinews.org/programs/connections>

Ralph Manchester  
Vice Provost & Director, UHS  
Professor of Medicine