August 5, 2009

Message from: Egilda Terenzi, MD
Medical Director, Student Health Services
Division of Student Affairs

As faculty and staff members, you are important partners in our efforts to address the challenges of the H1N1 (swine) flu pandemic.

We have appreciated your cooperation throughout the summer, when the H1N1 flu affected many of our students and faculty and staff members. Most patients have experienced mild cases and recovered within seven days. However, a more severe form of the virus could emerge this fall.

We encourage faculty who see students who appear ill to advise them to:

• Visit the campus health center.
• Urge them not to attend class until well.
• Physically distance themselves from others.
• Remind students to wash their hands thoroughly several times a day.

Some students in higher-risk categories may experience very serious complications. We understand class attendance is vital. However, we respectfully request that you consider relaxing your class attendance and make-up-work requirements for students affected by the H1N1 virus.

Those with H1N1 can infect others for seven days after the onset of symptoms. During that time, they would expose other students to the virus if they attended class.

Individuals with flu-like symptoms but without risk factors or complications may be instructed to stay home rather than go to a medical facility. Consequently, some students may not have official confirmation of the virus.

We will continue to communicate regularly with our faculty and staff members about this public health challenge. We also encourage you to visit www.shs.usf.edu, where we will post updates and links to additional resources on the Web.

Thank you for your cooperation and dedication to our students’ health and well-being.

For answers to frequently asked questions about H1N1 flu, please follow this link: http://floridashealth.com/DEMO/php/SwineFlu/documents/swinefluqanda.doc