

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

27. PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

In the event of a public health crisis, whether local, regional, or national, the College may be called upon to close in the interest of public health. As a result, all employees will be sent home until such time that the Department of Public Health determines that the threat has passed and state officials reopen schools. Instructors should have a contingency plan as classes will also be on hiatus until the College reopens. All faculty and staff should be aware that if the College is closed, it may be for a day or two or for as long as several weeks. In the case of a public health crisis, stay tuned to local radio and television stations for updates. They will also indicate when the College will reopen and when classes will resume.

Three Rivers Community College is part of all Public Health Emergency Response Plans as an institution of higher learning. The emergence of new influenza viruses, specifically SARS, H5N1 (“avian flu”) and H1N1 (“swine flu”) in the last decade has prompted federal and state public health departments to develop these plans to reduce the number of individuals who may become ill during an outbreak of a strong influenza strain or other public health crisis. It is important to be aware of/and prepared for the outcome of an influenza outbreak in Connecticut while remaining calm and optimistic.

Keep in mind that as much as 40% of the workforce could be out of work for any given two week time period during a public health crisis, and voluntary (in-home) quarantines for those that are ill may be stressed by local, state, or federal officials even if the College has not yet closed. While it is important to abide by this request if it is given, this means that it may be difficult to obtain basic necessities during this time frame. Follow standard preparedness procedures for ensuring enough food and water for an extended period. It is recommended that all TRCC employees visit the Connecticut Department of Public Health’s website:
<http://www.dph.state.ct.us/>

Prevention is the key to safeguard against the spread a virus through human-to-human contact. The following general guidelines are set forth to assist students, faculty, and staff in remaining personally healthy and to help to keep others healthy as well.

- Prevention of disease is the most important.
 - Cover your mouth and nose when coughing. Encourage others to do the same.
 - Use appropriate methods to clear nasal passages and promptly discard used tissue.
 - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water and / or use the hand sanitizer dispensers located throughout the campus.
- If you do become sick (with ANY sort of illness):
 - Stay at home to recover faster and help to prevent the spread of illness to others.
 - Drink plenty of fluids and make sure that someone is aware that you are ill.
 - Limit physical activity and get plenty of rest.
 - When you are feeling better, return to work but no sooner. You may still be carrying the virus or bacteria that made you ill so continue to follow extensive hygiene procedures to reduce the risk of transmission.