

Wednesday, January 20, 2020 12:00 pm

I know that we are all hearing a lot of information about the Coronavirus and wanted to share a little bit of the information that the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) have been sharing with us.

- Currently, the vast majority of the known cases are centered in China. 5 cases have been identified w/in the US – there has not currently been any evidence of person-to-person spread of the virus in the US. Virginia has tested 3 individuals for potential coronavirus – 2 were negative and 1 is still pending the test results (pending case is in northern VA). (as of 1/28/2020)
- The situation is rapidly evolving. The VDH website <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/> will update information every Thursday, if not sooner.
- Currently, only individuals who have recently traveled to/from China and/or have been in direct contact with someone else who has traveled to/from China (or has been confirmed to have coronavirus) within last 14 days and are showing signs of respiratory illness are the only ones that are considered POTENTIAL Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) for coronavirus.
- If an individual, has travelled from China in the last 14 days, been in close contact with someone who has been in China in last 14 days, has been in close contact with someone who has been confirmed to have coronavirus in last 14 days, demonstrates symptoms of respiratory illness, they should seek medical attention (their PCP, urgent care or ER) AND should call the provider BEFORE their visit and alert of symptoms their and mention their potential China related travel (or contact with someone who has traveled from China or has been confirmed to have coronavirus)
- It's also important to note that we are still in flu season – flu is currently considered widespread in VA. The VDH recommends that students, faculty and staff take 3 actions to prevent further spread of influenza:
 - Get vaccinated every year – if you haven't already gotten your flu shot this year, it is not too late.
 - **Practice good hand hygiene and cough etiquette. Everyone should wash their hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers regularly. Those that develop a cough or a sneeze should do so into a tissue or the inside of their elbow, washing their hands afterwards.**
 - Take antivirals as prescribed by your healthcare provider if you do become sick.

Remember – good hand hygiene and cough etiquette are the key to preventing the spread of most viral infections. Also, if you have a fever, personal isolation is a good idea (e.g. keep your germs contained).